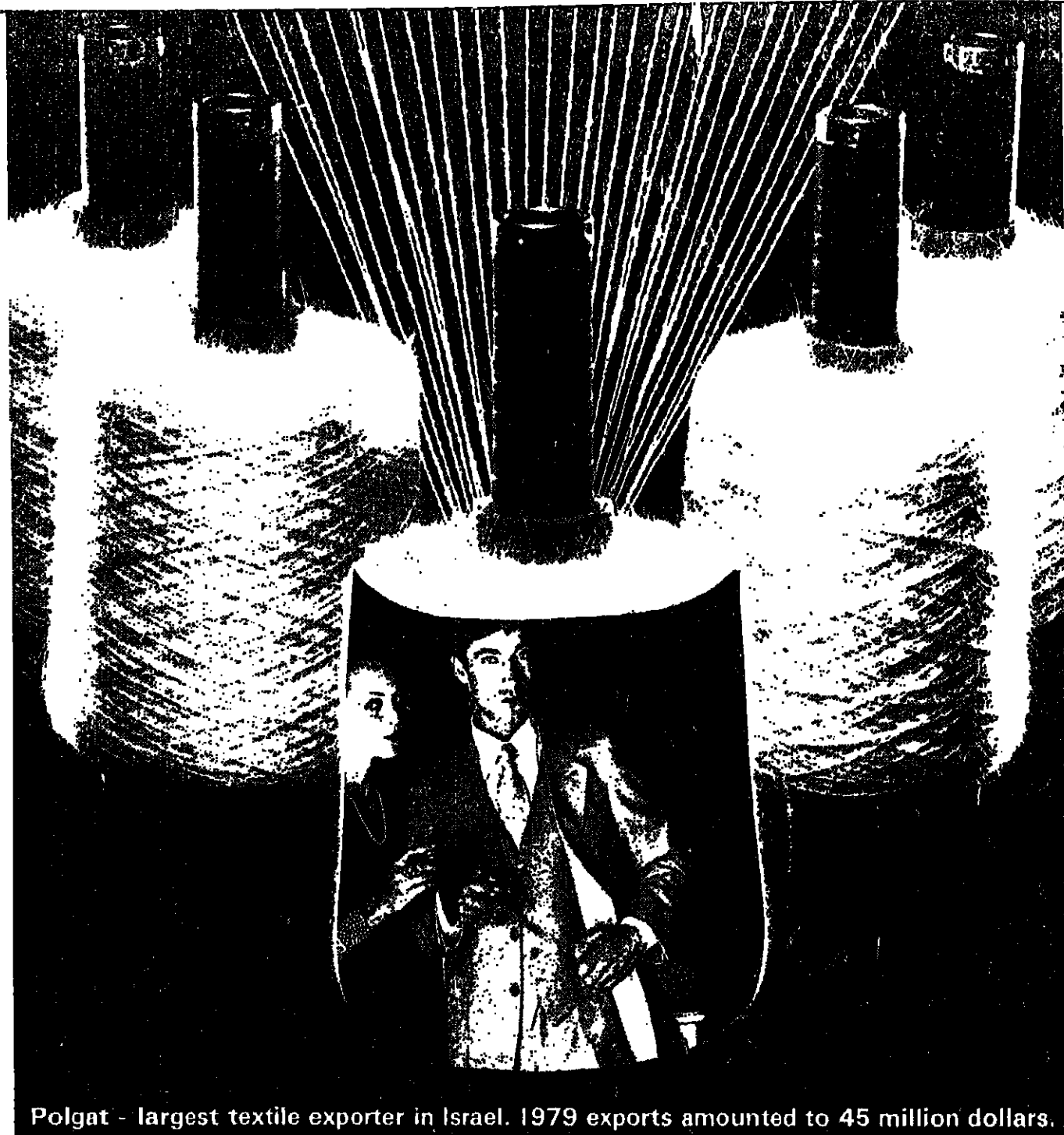




Polgat - largest textile exporter in Israel. 1979 exports amounted to 45 million dollars.

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THE JERUSALEM
POST
ISRAEL-EGYPT
TRAVEL SUPPLEMENT
Wednesday, June 11, 1980



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DECIDING TO GO is usually the easiest part. One's motives will no doubt be complicated — perhaps a mixture of curiosity (Egypt and the pyramids are there, after all); research (one's Jewish roots, if one is to be serious, extend beyond the last bunch of Nobel Prize-winners); ambivalence (do we really want peace?); disbelief (you mean they want peace?); jaded libido (tassel-tossing hints); financial horsecrap (Egypt could be the cheapest "foreign" option available to Israelis); adventurousness (any fool can go — the trick is to return in one piece), and so on.

No matter how complicated one's reasons, however, they will appear simple compared to the difficulties of getting a visa, getting past immigration and customs, finding a decent hotel, getting a call through to Israel, getting anything on time. The bureaucratic runaround is so frustrating that one does not have to be paranoid to conclude that visitors are not really wanted in Egypt. For Israelis, their first contact with the Egyptian way of doing things comes at the consulate in the Tel Aviv Hilton, which is open only from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and where queues sometimes start forming at 8 a.m. Those who travel overland will have the misfortune of having to contend with the "system" at El Arish, where an excess of officials has resulted in a complicated procedure that keeps as many of them as busy as possible for as long as possible. For instance, I was made to wait for more than four hours although I had a valid visa and a perfectly good passport. I heard of people who had been kept there a day or two, and of others who had been sent back, also for no good reason. The moment there is any query about your documents, El Arish has to ring the Department of Immigration and the General Investigation Department in Cairo. Multiply the number of officials who discuss the case in El Arish by the average time each one spends on the phone to Cairo and you have the time it will take to let you through. The soonest anyone can expect to get past the obstacle course is about an hour. And then the hassle begins of finding a way to the Suez Canal and across to Cairo, and — if you haven't made a prior reservation — booking in at a suitable hotel.

ALTHOUGH THE SYSTEM they perpetuate is a crazy one, Egyptian officials are seldom malicious as individuals. Like their countrymen on both sides of the Canal, they are usually polite and, well, sweet and humble, for lack of better words. For me the most impressive aspect of the country was the unaffected pleasantness of the people. I often found myself overwhelmed and at a loss as to how to react to unexpected generosity and affection. It is of course possible to disguise helpfulness as nothing more than obsequiousness; on the other hand one could argue that even obsequiousness is preferable to the constant clash of egos that passes for civilized conduct elsewhere.

What of the country itself, this exciting and exasperating, romantic and backward land of 42 million, increasing at a rate of a million a year? Egypt covers an area of 1,002,000 sq. km., only 3 per cent of which is cultivable. It is bounded by Libya to the west, Israel and the Red Sea to the east, the Mediterranean to the north, and Sudan to the south. The country may be divided into four major physical regions: the Nile Valley and Delta; the Western and Southern Desert; the Eastern Desert; Sinai. Visitors to Egypt will be concerned mainly with the first region, where practically all the fertile land is to be found. Where the green ends, the desert begins — there is no gradual transition from cultivated land to barren desert. From the air the appearance is that of a long, narrow oasis or green snake on an enormous beige sandpit.

Egyptian guides are proud of



Egypt:



An introduction



A village between Memphis and Sakkara.

their country and anxious that you should be impressed by it, perhaps to the extent of falling in love with it, and the information they disseminate is not always accurate. One hears a lot about various land reclamation schemes that were implemented after the 1952 revolution that saw the abdication of Farouk, and about grandiose housing renewal schemes for Cairo's countless poor. Bread, you are told, costs one piastre (about one-and-a-half-cents) a loaf. Vegetables are cheap.

DESPITE EGYPT'S post-Camp David alienation in the Arab world, Cairo is still the political centre of the Middle East. It is also the intellectual centre of Islam. There is a constant contradiction and tension here as in other Islamic countries between tradition and modernity. In the streets of the capital and of Alexandria, Western dress seems to predominate (albeit in cuts reminiscent of the 1940s), but ankle-length shirts — tunics like those of the ancients — are also much in evidence. On the surface women are much more "modern" and "liberated" than one might expect. They work, they drive, some even go out alone. And they still have a long way to go if they want to catch up with their Western sisters.

But the population explosion is the biggest problem. Conversations keep turning to it, returning to it, obsessively. Birth control clinics exist in every village, but the problem is not in the clinics, where people are more aware of the situation. Nonetheless, a wealthy businessman I know stops passengers in the streets of Cairo and urges family planning. He himself has two children; farmers apparently cannot have too many as they help them work the land.

Another source of potential trouble for Sadat are Egypt's new friends and protectors: crew-cut U.S. servicemen, stripped from the

wallet up, jogging through the ancient sites with beer cans in their hands. For the West the marriage of convenience between the descendants of the pharaohs (and the Turks, Arabs and Kurds, etc.) and Uncle Sam's pride and joy is undoubtedly a Good Thing. But one cannot help wondering how it will look against the eternal sands that constitute historical perspective in the Land of the Nile.

A (VERY) BRIEF HISTORY IT IS FUTILE to attempt to convey six thousand years of history in a few hundred words; and it will be argued that an outline of the main periods and events can only be more confusing than helpful. Nonetheless, here goes.

In the beginning, or thereabouts, was the Ancient Period. Most authorities divide this up into: Prehistoric Age; Archaic Period; Old Kingdom (3000-2700 BCE); First Intermediate Period; Middle Kingdom; End of the Middle Kingdom and the Second Intermediate Period; New Empire; Libyan Dynasties and the Cushites (Ethiopian); Saites; and the Persian Period (525-332 BCE).

When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, he ushered in the Graeco-Roman Period (332 BCE-395 CE). The Byzantine Period was next (395-640 CE). And then came the Islamic Period which saw the Moslem conquest; Egypt under the Omayyad and Abbasid Caliphate; the Tulunid Secession; an Egyptian Caliphate; the Fatimids; the Crusaders; Mameluke rule; and the Ottoman Period.

The Modern Period, which began towards the end of the 18th century, comprises the French occupation; years of anarchy; the era of

Muhammad Ali; Abbas I and Said (1848-68); Ismail (1869-79; he opened the Suez Canal in 1869 and later sold his shares to Britain for £4m.); the first nationalist movement; British occupation; Abbas II (1902-1914); the British Protectorate; Ahmed Fuad's ascension to the throne (1922) and Egypt's declaration of independence; Farouk I's ascension to the throne (1936); World War II; anti-British agitation; the 1948 war against Israel; the "Free Officers" coup (1952) — Mohammed Naguib and agrarian reform; abolition of monarchy (1958) and Egypt declared a republic; Gamal Abdel Nasser takes over (1954); the Suez Crisis (1956); formation of United Arab Republic (union between Egypt and Syria, 1958; lasts until 1961); the June 1967 war; Nasser's death (1970); Anwar el-Sadat and the October 1973 war; peace with Israel (1979).

MOST OF THE sites around which visitors are shown — and most of the objects in the Egyptian Museum — date from the Ancient Period.

The traditional division of the country into Upper Egypt (the southern region, essentially African) and Lower Egypt (the Delta, influenced by Western Asians and Libyans) dates to prehistoric times. The Old Kingdom (c. 3000-2270 BCE) was the time of the 1st-6th Dynasties (the 1st and 2nd Dynasties are also referred to as the Archaic Period). Menes united Upper and Lower Egypt into a kingdom, which he ruled. He established Memphis as the capital. The first pyramid (the Step Pyramid) was built at Sakkara around 2700 BCE. The pyramids attributed to Cheops (Khufu), Chephren (Khafre) and Mycerinus (Menkaure) are believed to have been constructed between 2600-2200 BCE, during the 4th, 5th and 6th

Dynasties when the power of the pharaohs was at its greatest. The concessions they made to feudal nobility led to the collapse of the Old Kingdom.

During the First Intermediate Period (2270-2100 BCE) Theban princes (of the 7th-10th Dynasties) succeeded in reunifying the country.

The Middle Kingdom lasted from 2100-1700 BCE and included the 11th-13th Dynasties. Thebes (Luxor — Karnak today) became the capital of the country; the arts flourished and a great deal of impressive architectural and sculptural work was done, as the remaining ruins testify.

The period from 1700-1555 BCE was one of decline. The Hyksos (shepherd kings from Asia Minor) invaded the country, introducing the horse and the war-chariot. They ruled for a century and a half until driven out by Ahmose (c. 1550), who reunited Egypt.

The New Kingdom (18th-20th Dynasties) or New Empire (this was a time of territorial conquest) lasted from 1550 to 1080 BCE. Thebes was the centre of the great power that Egypt had become.

The greater proportion of the pharaohs who became household names reigned between 1525 and 1080 BCE. Tuthmosis I and II conquered Nubia and Syria between 1525 and 1448. Amenhotep the IV's dates are 1361-1340. He was married to Nefertiti and changed his name to Akhnaton (Spirit of the Sun) when he broke from the religion of Amun and substituted a cult of sun worship that some maintain was the origin of monotheism.

Tutankhaton (1338-1325 BCE) restored the cult of Amun and renamed himself Tutankhamun (this is the King Tut whose tomb in the Valley of the Kings was supposedly cursed).

The period of the Ramessides stretched from 1308 to 1080 BCE. The best known is Ramesses II who is associated — some say erroneously — with Moses and the Exodus. He reigned for 67 years and left a large number of statues and inscriptions around, which can still be seen from Abu Simbel to Cairo.

The 21st-26th Dynasties ruled during The Late Age (1080-525 BCE). The noteworthy figure from this period is Shoshonk I (920 BCE). He is the "Shishak" of 1 Kings 14, 25 who took Jerusalem and despoiled the Temple.

During the Persian domination (525-332 BCE) Darius completed a canal linking the Nile to the Red Sea.

The Greek period saw the founding of Alexandria; after the death of Cleopatra in 30 BCE, Egypt became a Roman province. Vespasian was made emperor in 69 CE. Christianity became a popular religion throughout Egypt.

With the division of the Roman Empire in 395 CE, Egypt fell under the Eastern Emperor. The Byzantine Period lasted until Amr Ibn Al As conquered the country in 640, and repressed Christianity in the name of the Prophet Mohammed. (His capital, Fustat, is today part of Cairo, which was founded in 969 by Jauhar. The mosque Ibn Al As built in 642 — the first in the country — still stands.)

1171 CE was when Saladin conquered Syria and Palestine. Mameluke rule began with Malik al Salih (1240-49), who defeated the army of the 8th Crusade and conquered Jerusalem. He forced Jews to wear yellow outfits and walk around with a heavy ball tied around the neck.

Napoleon conquered Alexandria in 1798 and within a year established a precarious hold over the rest of the country. The French army remained in Egypt for about three years.

This brings us to Muhammad Ali, founder of the last Egyptian Dynasty (which ended with King Farouk) and acknowledged "creator" of Modern Egypt. Ali was a Turk who proved to be good for both Egypt and the Jews. He took control in 1805 and ruled until 1848. □

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Getting there

VISAS

The Egyptian Consulate at the Tel Aviv Hilton is open between 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Sun.-Thurs. Come at least a couple of hours early if you want to be sure of getting in. Visas cost \$12 plus \$2 (it has to be in American currency). They also want two passport photographs.

Tourists who arrive in Cairo by plane can purchase a visa at the airport. If you don't have the stamina to contend with super-bureaucratic procedures at the airport, get your visa before you leave. It might save you having to take the next plane back.

Everyone entering Egypt must register with the Interior Ministry or at a police station within seven days of arrival. Make sure your hotel does this for you.

CURRENCY

Visitors who are not on a package tour are obliged to change \$150 at the El Arish border post or at Cairo Airport. But I know many people who were allowed through although they hadn't changed the full amount. Still it's best to have at least \$150 with you. If you want to change Egyptian currency back into dollars on departure, you have to produce bank slips proving that you spent a minimum of \$20 during each day of your stay. You have to pay three Egyptian pounds (EL3) border tax when you leave the country. (There are 100 piastres to the pound; 68 piastres equal one dollar — some shops in Cairo will give you 75 or 80 piastres for a dollar.)

HEALTH REGULATIONS

The printed regulations stipulate that tourists on arrival in Egypt should have valid smallpox (and depending on their country of origin, yellow fever and cholera) vaccination certificates. But no one ever asks for them.

HEALTH HINTS

Take out health insurance (and insure your luggage) before you leave. Your travel agent should be able to arrange this for you. Malaria has supposedly been wiped out in Egypt, but the mosquitoes are still a nuisance. A tube of mosquito repellent will always be useful, especially in Upper Egypt.

Bilharzia is a deadly disease and it affects an incredible number of Egyptians. Avoid swimming in rivers, and don't so much as dip a finger in irrigation canals or meandering streams in the countryside.

FLYING TO EGYPT

(See also "Package Tours") Nefertiti (Egyptian) Airlines fly between Egypt and Israel on Sundays and Wednesdays. (From July, they will add a Friday flight.) A

plane leaves Cairo for Ben-Gurion Airport at 9:45 a.m. and arrives at 11 a.m. The same plane leaves for Cairo at 13 noon and arrives at 1:15 p.m.

El Al Israel Airlines fly the same route on Mondays and Thursdays (also Tuesdays from July). The Ben-Gurion-Cairo flight departs at 7 p.m. and arrives 1 hr. 10 min. later. The return flight takes off at 9:50 p.m. and arrives at Ben-Gurion at 11 p.m.

The flight costs \$85 one way, \$170 return.

On purchasing tickets starting Cairo, passengers pay a fiscal tax of EL1.25.

On arrival, if you're not being met, you must first change money, then stand in line for a visa, find your luggage, go through customs, and so forth. Although *baksheesh* is

the name of the game here, don't make the mistake of trying to bribe officials.

The Emeco Agency (which is connected with VIP in Tel Aviv) charge \$24 per couple to get them through the airport formalities and into town.

In Cairo both airlines tend to oversell tickets, so drop in and perhaps keep phoning to check that you're on the list.

The duty-free shop at Cairo Airport is cheaper than the one at Ben-Gurion Airport.

An encouraging note: Pilots have long maintained that Cairo's is the most dangerous airport in the world.

THE OVERLAND ROUTE (See "Package Tours") The Neot Sinai and El Arish

border posts close at 4 p.m. and do not open at all on Fridays and Saturdays.

An Egged bus (362) leaves Tel Aviv for Neot Sinai at 11 a.m. Sunday through Thursday and gets to the border at about 3 p.m. This hardly gives you enough time to get through the Israeli side, let alone the Egyptian side. The ticket costs \$24. Try to avoid going on Thursday because if anything goes wrong you might find yourself spending the weekend at the border or returning home.

There are sheruts from Jerusalem (Damascus Gate) and Tel Aviv. The cost from Jerusalem is about \$30, and from Tel Aviv about \$30. A group of four or five should be able to hire a sherut at Damascus Gate for around \$150. Those travelling alone might take a

sherut from Jerusalem to Gaza for \$150, another sherut from there to Rafiah for \$2.50, and a "special" taxi to the border for \$30.

On your return, you'll find many sheruts at Neot Sinai; they go to various cities and fill up rapidly. There are no standard prices.

The bus from Neot Sinai to the Egyptian border costs 50 piastres.

On the Egyptian side, a cab to the taxi station at El Arish (about 3 kilometres away) costs from 10 to 25 piastres. At the taxi station, there are sheruts to Ismailiya, Kantara, Cairo and other cities. A taxi to Kantara costs EL1.50. The last stop in the Suez Canal, where a ferry takes you across for 5 piastres or free. Although the ferry is fairly regular, you may have to wait more than half an hour for it.

On the other side you may find a sherut to Cairo or you may have to walk or take a taxi to the taxi stop half a kilometre away, where you'll find a sherut to the capital for EL1.50. These sheruts fill up rapidly. The trip from here to downtown Cairo takes about five hours. There is also a train from Kantara to Cairo for 50 piastres. El Arish to Cairo takes seven or eight hours by car.

The one-lane floating bridge across the Canal is lowered once a day (except Friday) at about 11 a.m. or noon for those who're driving their own cars. There are gas stations at reasonable intervals along the route. It's best to fill your tank whenever you stop. Also check water and oil because of the heat. If your car is in dodgy condition, don't take it. Insurance and import permits are required for all cars that are brought into Egypt. You'll also need an International Driver's Licence. Enquiries to MEMSI, 19 Rehov Petah Tikva, Tel Aviv (Tel. 03-522981), or 33 Rehov Yafa, Jerusalem (Tel. 02-222421).

Take food and water if you're going overland, as it can take more than 12 hours to get to your destination.

There is a mobile kiosk at Neot Sinai where you can buy cold drinks, chocolates, and so on.

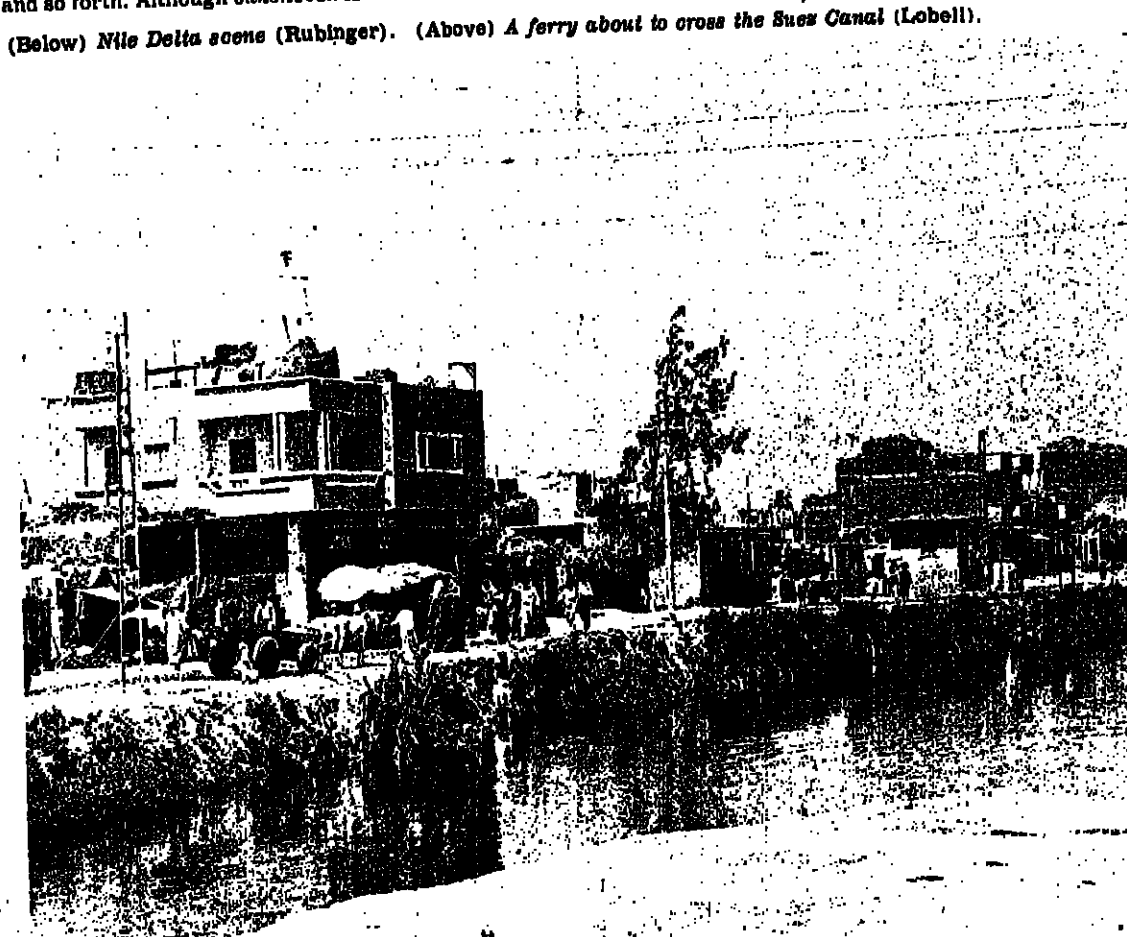
There is a cafe with a few chairs under umbrellas at the Egyptian border compound. (The toilets are grotty — use the ones on the Israeli side.)

El-Arish has restaurants and other watering holes. You cannot take fruit and vegetables across either border — sandwiches and dried fruit are OK.

PACKAGE TOURS

VIP Tours (130 Hayarkon St., Tel Aviv, Tel. 03-242181-2) have buses that leave Sundays both ways. They will get you from Tel Aviv to Cairo and book you in at a hotel for the first night.

(Continued overleaf)



(Below) Nile Delta scene (Rubinger). (Above) A ferry about to cross the Suez Canal (Lobell).

HELLO NEIGHBOUR!

COME VISIT...

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jaffa
suez
port said
luxor

aswan

nile
ismaillia

accre
alexandria

port said
beersheba

eilat

caesarea
sea of galilee
dead sea

haifa

alexandria
jerusalem

tel aviv

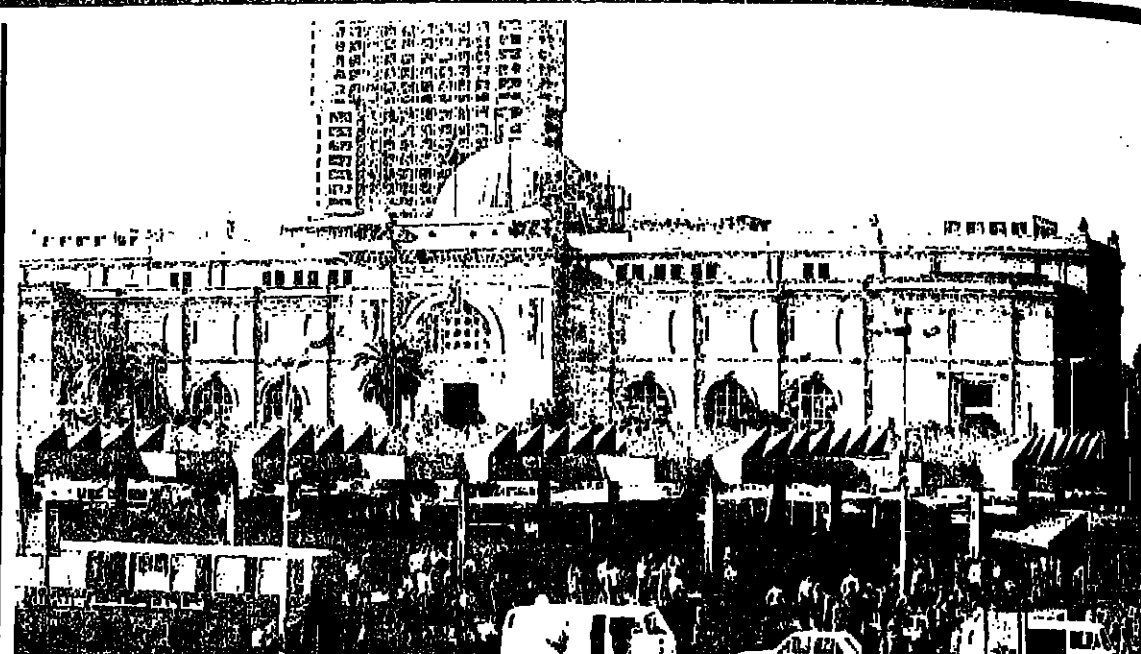
gizeh

caesarea
sea of galilee
nile
ismaillia
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Cairo's Central Bus Station, with the Egyptian Museum in the background. (Nowin)

(Continued from page 5)

The air-conditioned bus ride that VIP organizes from Tel Aviv costs \$35 (\$70 return; payable in Israeli currency).

A hotel reservation costs \$20 (for the tele to confirm the booking) plus whatever the hotel they choose charges for the night (usually about \$30).

For about \$85, then, VIP will get you from Tel Aviv to Cairo and into a hotel the first night, thus relieving you of the bother of having to organize each step on your own. The best argument I heard for travelling this way is that the formalities at the border can delay arrival time in Cairo by several hours, and if you don't have a reservation you have to start hunting around for a hotel in the middle of the night after an exhausting trip.

The return ticket from Cairo (if purchased at VIP's sister agency, Emeco, at 3 Talaat Harb St., Tel. 747898-748820) costs \$45 - \$10 more than in Tel Aviv. The owner of Emeco is Elhamy Elsayat, and if you're ever stranded he's a good person to ask for.

VIP have a resident representative in Cairo and agents in all the main Egyptian tourist centres. They offer 4/5-day (\$840) and 8-day (\$890-\$990) package tours by air or by land or by air and land; they also offer optional tours for those who do not wish to be tied to a specific package. The main sites in Cairo, Luxor and Aswan are covered in the 8-day package; you may take an optional tour to Alexandria.

As the pioneers in Israel-Egypt travel, they have already experienced most of the problems that are likely to arise. In order to get around the language difficulties some Israelis have, they are bringing Egyptian guides to learn Hebrew in an urban VIP also provide business contacts and secretarial services in Egypt.

As well as arranging Nile cruises on steamboats from Luxor to Aswan (3 nights and 4 days, for \$640), the company organizes yacht trips for small groups (of at least eight people) who wish to sail from Tel Aviv to Port Said. The 5-day round trip by yacht costs \$500 per person and includes hotel accommodation on land and sightseeing tours. In winter, the Nile cruises from Luxor to Aswan and back lasts for 7 nights and costs \$800.

The man to speak to at VIP is Walter Arbib. He brought the first group of (41) Egyptian Jews to Israel at his company's expense, and is keen to it that one hotel at least serves kosher food in Cairo.

Another Israeli company that advertises package tours to Egypt is Hello Tours in Tel Aviv (Tel. 03-241342). They offer an 8-day Cairo/Luxor/Aswan package for \$716, which of course includes air fares and tours.

THE BORDER CROSSING is almost always a frustrating, infuriating experience.

What takes time is immigration on the Egyptian side when you're going in, and customs on the Israeli side when you return.

The majority of the Egyptian officials tend to be law graduates who for one reason or another joined immigration or police. Sometimes they get bored; other times they're over-zealous. They're on the lookout for irregularities - of any sort. If there is any question about the validity of your travel documents, fly - don't go overland.

The one Israeli immigration official in Neot Sinai when I crossed in May was more efficient than his 20 counterparts on the other side.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Israeli customs. It took them three hours to clear our bus, which had only 20 passengers. "Security" was the holy cow in whose name we were peddled so much bull here. The "system" demanded that we sit on benches in a large hall and wait until we were summoned. Our bags were thrown out and left on a counter. Personal effects were X-rayed despite the objections of the owners. Ordinary holidaymakers were made to feel like criminals at best and terrorists at worst. And the commanding officer at the site was not above insulting people in Hebrew when he thought they didn't understand. O

Miscellaneous information

ACCOMMODATION. The prices quoted in this supplement were taken from Egyptian Ministry of Tourism publications and are not always reliable. They should be used only as a rough guide. They do not include meals, service charges, etc.

Egyptian hotels are divided into five categories: Luxury (5 stars); 1st Class A (4 stars); 1st Class B (3 stars); 2nd Class A (2 stars); 2nd Class B (1 star).

Breakfast costs from 80 piastres to EL1.20. Lunch and dinner (if you keep to the fixed menu) cost between EL2 and EL5 maximum (in the luxury hotels).

Unless you're staying in a first-class establishment, make sure before you check in that the room and sheets are clean.

AMERICAN EXPRESS have their office in the Nile Hilton.

BAKSHEESH (see "Tipping").

BANKS in the Sheraton and other large hotels are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Get a bank slip for the money you change - this will be useful when you leave and want to exchange Egyptian currency for dollars or whatever. Change only as much as you need.

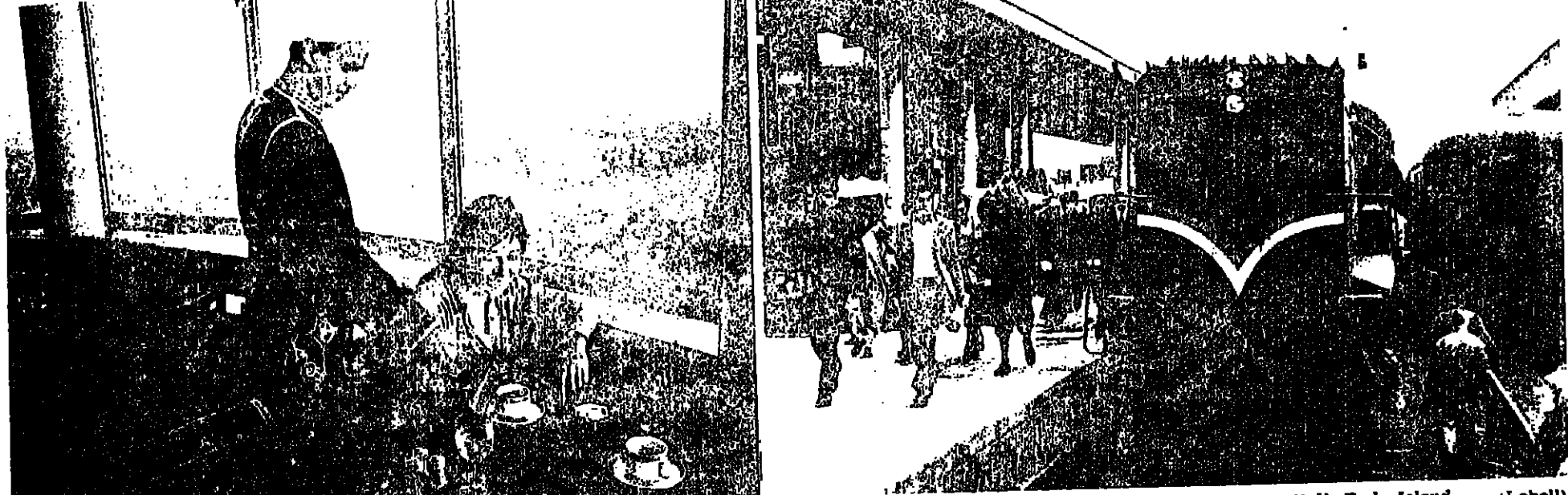
BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS. It is a pleasure to find books that sell for the exact local equivalent of the retail price recommended by the British and American publishers (and not for two or three times the printed amount, as in Israel).

However, if you've misplaced your copy of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* you shouldn't have too much trouble finding another here.

The *Jerusalem Post* is sold in the Sheraton and other large hotels. The local *Egyptian Gazette* won't really tell you much about what's happening in Egypt (or anywhere else).

BUDGET TRAVEL. The return air fare to Egypt from Israel is \$179. For the same amount it is possible to spend a fortnight in Egypt, and to cover all transportation, food and accommodation costs. You will have to travel overland via El Arish, use only public transportation and stay in 2nd-class hotels.

BUSES in Cairo are usually only crowded during rush hours. The stories about people hanging out of the buses are true. All buses have their rear doors removed or permanently open. Jumping on and off moving buses and hanging out of the rear door seems to be something the young men do, whether the bus is full or not. In Cairo, you never feel that the bus driver is a frustrated Stirling Moss. You don't pay when you get on - a collector squeezes through the bus collecting fares (2-4 piastres). Have small change ready. Find out before you get on how many stops it is to where you want to go. It will help if Arabic numerals mean anything to you. The bus ride to the Giza Pyramids from the Central Bus Station behind the Hilton costs 4 piastres.



(Left) The view from the restaurant at the top of the Cairo Tower. (Right) Cairo's railway station. (Below) A floating taxi that crosses the Nile from the capital's Roda Island. (Lobell)

FILM. In Cairo, EL3 for a roll of 35 mm. 36-frame Agfacolor film is reasonable. A roll of 20-frame Kodacolor ASA 100 costs EL2.85.

THE ISRAEL EMBASSY is on Mohleddin Abu El Ezz Street in Dokki, not far from the Sheraton Hotel. Phone: 701488, 700198, 702408, 708256.

TRAINS There are trains to most cities and towns. They are probably the best way to travel to Upper Egypt if you want to see something of the country. The stations have many gulchets - one each for first, second and third class tickets, one for bedding, and one for information. Since the station names are written in Arabic and are not announced on the train, inform fellow passengers of your destination. Book in advance, especially if you're going on a long journey and want a sleeper.

SOFT DRINKS cost 15, 25, 30 or 40 piastres or more, depending where you buy them and if you can bargain. At Lappas, in downtown Cairo, a 7-Up or Cola costs 18 piastres.

TAXIS. If you climb into a stationary taxi, outside your hotel, say, the fare will be four or more times higher than if you stop a moving car. An inner-city fare in Cairo can cost between 20-25 piastres and EL1.50 (maximum), depending on where you catch the cab. Some visitors insist that the driver turn his meter on, and threaten to take another cab if he doesn't.

TIPPING OR BAKSHEESH is a way of life here. Every human transaction has its price, usually negligible. People are ready, too ready, to provide services, most of which you probably do not want, and expect to be paid. Five or 10 piastres should be enough for those who open doors for you, carry your luggage, hand you a towel in the washroom, and so on. These tips make a difference, and people expect tips because their wages are low. You could change one or two pounds into 5-piastre pieces, which you give away like water.

THE TOURISM OFFICE is a run-down establishment on 5 Adli St. (the same street as the Great Synagogue's). Tel. 923657. The actual Ministry of Tourism is on Kasr el Eini St., near the central Tahrir Square; this building too is shabby beyond belief, considering that tourism is one of the mainstays of the economy (along with oil, the Suez Canal and remittances sent home by Egyptians working overseas). At the Adli address you can get a fairly good map of Cairo.

WATER in Cairo is filtered and chlorinated and still brown sometimes. Residents maintain that it's potable; if you have a sensitive stomach or simply don't like the idea of drinking the water, there is always bottled mineral water. A large (1.5 litre) bottle of Evian costs between EL1.15 and EL1.50. When you set out on a sightseeing trip into the desert, take water with you.

Fruits and vegetables, especially lettuce, should be washed well. There are tourists who drink only bottled water and eat only tinned food. But that is no way to get the feel of the country.



WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 1980

CAIRO (Masr el Qahira) is a city of nine million built for one-third the number. It sprawls over both banks of the Nile and on two islands, Gezira and Roda. The centre is around Tahrir Square, within spitting distance of the Hilton, the Egyptian Museum and the three main shopping streets — Talaat Harb, Kasr el Nil and Adli. The large, still functioning Sha'are Hashamayim Synagogue is on Adli Street. Emeco, the pioneers in Egyptian-Israeli travel, are at 3 Talaat Harb. The Khan el Khalili market is within (longish) walking distance from the centre. The Great Pyramid and the Sphinx are in Giza, about 20 minutes away by cab. There are numerous night clubs — with belly-dancers — on the road to Giza. Perhaps the best of these dancers is Nagwa Fouad at the Sheraton, across the river from the Hilton. The Israeli Embassy is in Mohameddin Abu El Ezz Street in Dokki, on the same side of the river as the Sheraton.

It might be an idea to check in at an hotel in the centre, acquire a good map (the Tourist Office at 5 Adli St. gives one free), and walk. Sightseeing proper should start with the Egyptian Museum and go on to include the Sphinx and the pyramids, Old Cairo, Islamic Cairo, Jewish Cairo, modern Cairo and a small whitewashed church in Zeitoun which in time could prove to be a greater attraction than the pyramids.

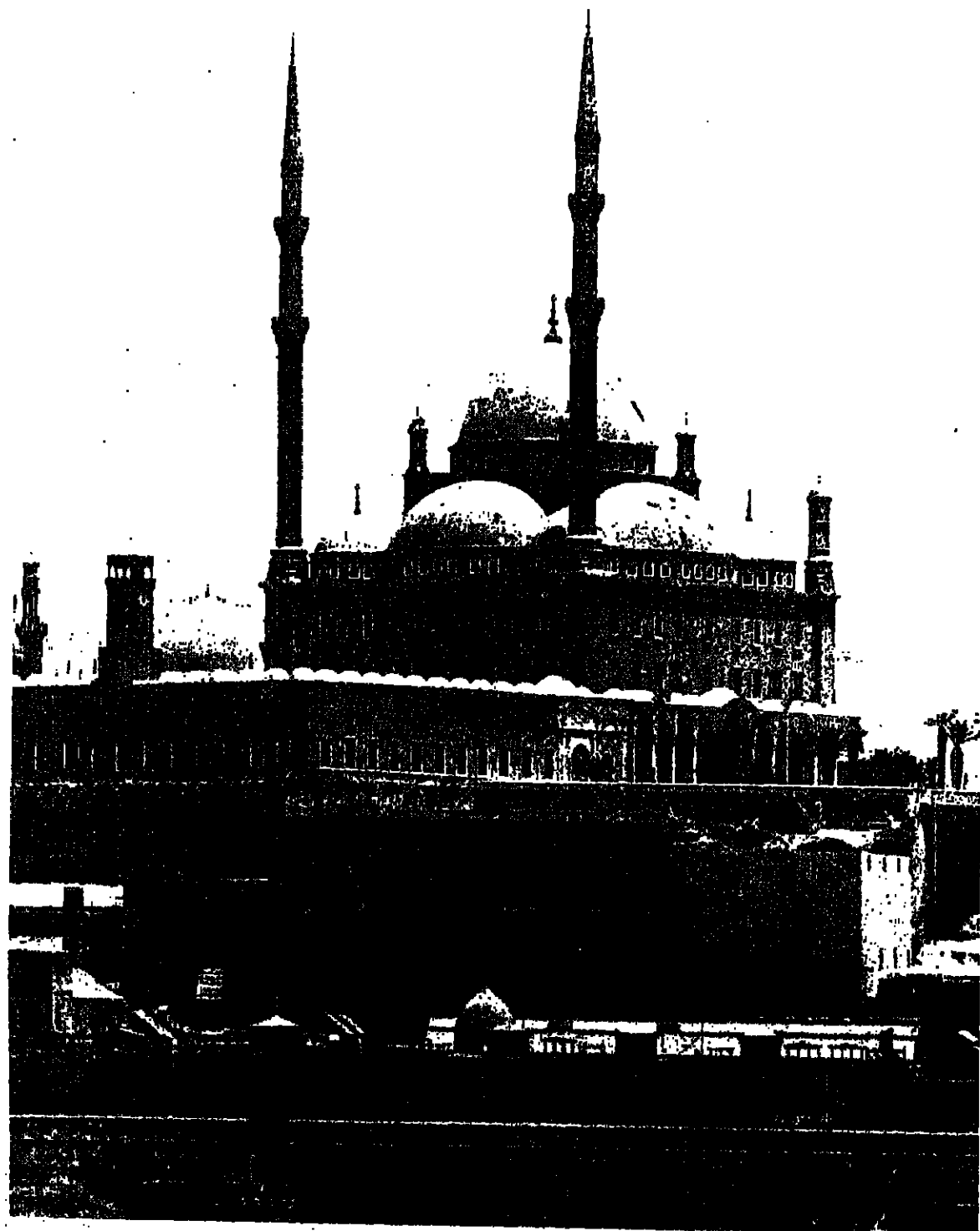
The city's observation tower is a unique feature: the large hotel and other blocks that rise above the river, however, remind one of small corners of Bombay and even Paris. References to the "Calcutta of the Middle East" hardly apply since you won't find bodies littering the streets.

Cairo is also known as "the city of a thousand minarets." These minarets are like sharpened pencils poised to write in the sky, like spears piercing the modest blue veil over this teeming Moslem African metropolis. At night the veil drops to reveal the stars and crescent moon in all their brilliance, and Cairo becomes beautiful. Everything looks different at night, the grime and shades of brown disappear under the blanket of black; there are two colours, mainly — black, and the yellow of electric lights, with odd patches of illuminated green palms and the blinking rainbow range of neon. The world becomes a carpeted gambling room, in which the loudest noise is the clicking of chips changing hands.

OUTSIDE, the constant screech and clatter of the city reinforces one's initial impression of the place as an infernal machine encoased in mud and stone and about to collapse into the Nile.

Going round a traffic island one is surprised by an illuminated billboard showing Sadat, the ruler himself, in wise and pensive mood. Portraits of Sadat — triumphant in military uniform, smiling happily; gazing far into the future — are to be found throughout the city; they are almost as ubiquitous as the black and white cabs that circulate like blood cells in the arteries and veins or boulevards and streets of the city. Like Ramesses II, whom he superficially resembles, Sadat seems to embody the spirit of his country: like a superlatively he practically brings the daily bustle to a halt whenever he makes one of his marathon speeches in parliament. The humblest kiosk owner turns on his TV set or radio and sits enthralled, listening to every word. Business is neglected. And Sadat goes on. And on. For three or four hours. And it is amazing, and a little frightening, that so many people can be mesmerized so easily. Every day, but more noticeably on Fridays, prayers from mosques are heard through public loudspeakers and long rows of kneeling men are to be found on the sidewalks, facing east, praying. Irrelevantly it occurs to one that priests and politicians

Cairo



The Citadel and Muhammad Ali Mosque.

(Lobell)

would have a much rougher time if people were deaf. Being deaf would certainly also help the tourist have a more pleasant time. You are awakened by the hooting of horns — short, nervous, insistent blasts — and you recall that they were the last thing you heard before you fell asleep. The city is vital, on the go 24 hours a day. Traffic at midnight here is more congested than in Tel Aviv during the Friday peak hour. It only lets up for a couple of hours after 2.30 or 3 a.m. The driving is insane — sheer anarchy. Bicycles are used as roads by motorcycles and cars. There doesn't appear to be anyone who's willing to give way to anyone else. It's a constant game of "chicken." No wonder then that the cabs are referred to as "flying tombs."

"Peace good?" I cornily asked a taxi driver as we zoomed along on an enormous bridge — it could have been the 9 October Bridge. He nodded. Yes. Then he said something that sounded like "Ten good."

"Ten good?" I asked.

"Ten good," he said. "Ten times good?" I persisted, still not sure what he meant. "No. Thank God," he articulated, slowly. "Thank God." Considering the almost total lawlessness on the roads, it must be some sort of miracle that there aren't more accidents. "That's because we're the best drivers in the world," suggested a young physician who was showing me around. "And the worst," I put in compulsively. Working hours are from 8 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. From 2 to 3 it's lunch. This is followed by a siesta. If Calreines work again it's from 5.30 or 6 to 8 p.m. Dinner is at 10, and they go to bed late. Those who work two jobs (in hotels at night, say) have to keep going on only a couple of hours' sleep a day. Despite the fact that they have it so rough, or perhaps because of it, the Egyptians are great joke-tellers. Joke: An ignorant guide is showing a group of Americans around one of the country's 82 pyramids when they come upon two

skulls in an otherwise empty chamber. "Whose are those?" asks a tourist. "The first one," replies the guide, is Ramesses II when he was 12 years old. The second is Ramesses II when he was 90. "Time stood still in the shopping centre somewhere around the 1940s — department stores (Clourel, where Farouk shopped and my father worked for a few years) and restaurants (like the original Gropi's) must have been very much like this during World War II when all the troops were here and the air was electric with intrigue and excitement. But the walls, surely, were more brightly painted then, the wares not so tacky. Alongside the pastel '40s facades, you find pockets of modernity — the luxury hotels. The rest comprises the medieval if not prehistoric accretions that the dispossessed rich and poor are not merely glaring here, they are blinding. So that's it, then — constant, unbearable noise, homicidal drivers, pervasive squalor, a greasy, hellish

cacophony — Cairo.

For many Jews and most Israelis, being in Egypt will seem like the realization of an impossible dream. Once in Egypt, however, they would make it a point to avoid travelling in groups that include other Israelis, who tend to be discourteous, noisy and incapable of letting anyone — guides, etc. — tell them anything.

SIGHTSEEING IN AND AROUND CAIRO

The Egyptian Museum. Faces the main bus station. Off Tahrir Sq. Entrance B1.1. It contains the largest collection of pharaonic monuments in the world. (The fact that other collections exist in the British Museum, the Louvre and elsewhere is evidence of the plundering spirit of Westerners.) The museum was built 80 years ago. It is atrociously lit and badly laid out. Dull yellow walls outside and inside. Musty, hot in summer. Gloomy, macabre atmosphere. Most of the objects in here, after all, were found in or around tombs. It is strange to hear Hebrew spoken in the corridors.

There are two main ways of looking at the ancient Egyptians. One, they believed in a lot of baloney (afterlife, etc.) and this is a lesson for us not to believe in paranormal rubbish today. Or, two, they penetrated the secrets of the universe, and if we interpret their symbols correctly we'll come closer to understanding the human psyche, the divine pattern, whatever. Of course there are other approaches to the culture; it might be salutary to recall Art Historian E.H. Gombrich's diametric attitude towards the "myth" that the hieroglyphs embodied "some portentous archetypal wisdom."

Jewish visitors could perhaps look at ancient Egyptian civilisation as part of the foundation of their own faith — Moses grew up and was educated in this culture; it makes as little sense for Jews to ignore their Egyptian "connection," then, as it does for Christians to ignore the Jewish roots of their faith. Akhnaton, for instance, whose religious reforms, according to the Jews, only "superficially resembled the introduction of monotheism," worshipped a solar deity, Aton. One needn't be a philologist to guess at the link with the Hebrew Adonai. Malmonides and the Ari "sojourned" in Egypt (as did Jesus and St. Mark). And so on.

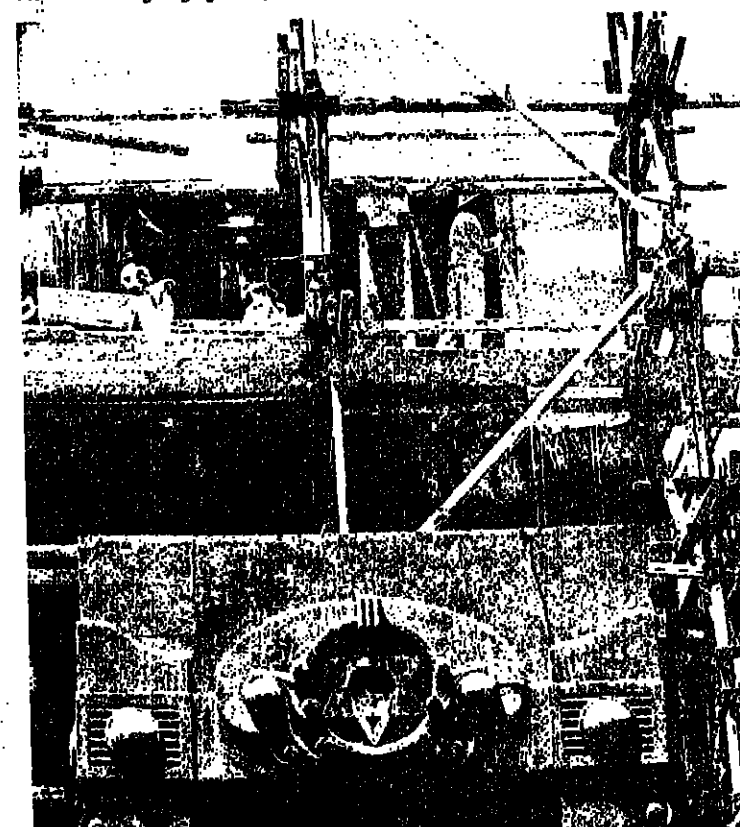
If you can spend only a half-day or a day in the Museum, start with Tutankhamun's treasures upstairs (all that glitters in this case is gold). These were recently on display in New York, where people had to wait months to see them.

The British archaeologist Howard Carter found Tutankhamun's tomb in Luxor's Valley of the Kings after six seasons of digging and just when he was on the point of giving up. Here's André Malraux for a guide for a few minutes:

"The tourists move on to Tutankhamun... Around the funerary furniture, gilded, orderly, alarming, the museum is no more than a royal lumber-room. In the real tomb, at Thebes, all these furnishings, these golden sarcophagi encoased one within another, were watched over by the exemplary black anubis (a stylized jackal) who symbolises the king at the moment when he emerges from death to enter eternal night. The frescoes on a yellow background, almost popular in style, painted in haste (no-one had foreseen the young Pharaoh's death) side by side with those depicting the apes of the Sun [at Thebes], are very different in tone from the luxurious funerary objects [in the Egyptian Museum]. Tradition has it that the archaeologists who discovered the tomb died mysteriously or violent deaths... The alabaster cup, which looks almost commonplace in the Museum, was found on the threshold of the antechamber facing towards the Valley of the Kings:



(Above) Students at Al Azhar University. (Below) Scaffolding for repairs of the Adli St. Synagogue. (Bottom) Interior Ibn Tulun Mosque. (Lobell)



"Mayst thou drink for eternity, turned towards the blessed Thebes." But here are the dried cornflowers which made it possible to deduce that Tutankhamun died in March or April, and here is the box containing the box he played with as a child.

"Here is a pink leather dog-collar, here are the 'heart scarabs' which were placed on the breast of the deceased to adjure his heart not to accuse him before the divine Judges; here is the scarab which carefully commemorates the killing of two hundred lions by Amenophis III, here the cosmetic spoon decorated with the figure of a golden jackal holding a fish in its mouth..."

Purchase Akila Chirino's Guide to the Museum (E.L.50), hire a guide, join a group. Even backpack brigadiers — who consider money spent on a room with a bath as money wasted — agree that a guided tour here is necessary.

The stela that mentions "Israel" — "...carved off is Ashkelon, seized upon is Gezer... Israel is laid waste, his seed is not..." dates to c.1250 BCE and the Pharaoh Merneptah, also known as Amenophis the Second (18th Dynasty). Some people argue from this that the Exodus did not occur during the reign of Ramesses II and the date should be revised. At any rate the stela may be found towards the back of the ground floor hall, on the right-hand side as you stand at the entrance.

Begin with the Old Kingdom exhibits to the left of the entrance if you want to do the museum in chronological order.

Make a point of seeing the colossal statues of Amenophis III and his wife Tihi (18th Dynasty, c. 18th century BCE); the statues of Prince Rahotep and his wife Nofret (4th Dynasty, 2700 BCE); the Egyptian Scribe sitting cross-legged (4th Dynasty; found at Sakkarah; there is a similar work in the Louvre; scribes enjoyed royal patronage and the prestige that went with it); the dwarf Seneb, his wife and their children (4th Dynasty); the six geese of Medum (whose colours have hardly faded since 2700 BCE; we still don't know the secret of the colours these ancients used); the statue of Djoser, the sepulchral chamber from the temple of Deir el Bahari (Luxor); the statue of the cow-goddess Hathor (also from Deir el Bahari); the royal mummy room (how these bodies were preserved is another mystery; an additional fee is charged for this exhibit).

THE PYRAMIDS AND THE SPHINX

There are three pyramids in Giza: the Great Pyramid, the Second Pyramid, the Third Pyramid.

The Great Pyramid was built by King Cheops (4th Dynasty, c.2700 BCE). It covers an area of 13 acres. Due to erosion, its height, which was once 148m., is now only 137m. But it is still the largest man-made structure in the world. The British Houses of Parliament and St. Paul's Cathedral could be placed within it and there would still be room to spare.

The Second Pyramid was built by Chephren, the son of Cheops. Out of respect for his father, he made his smaller (it is only 136 m. high).

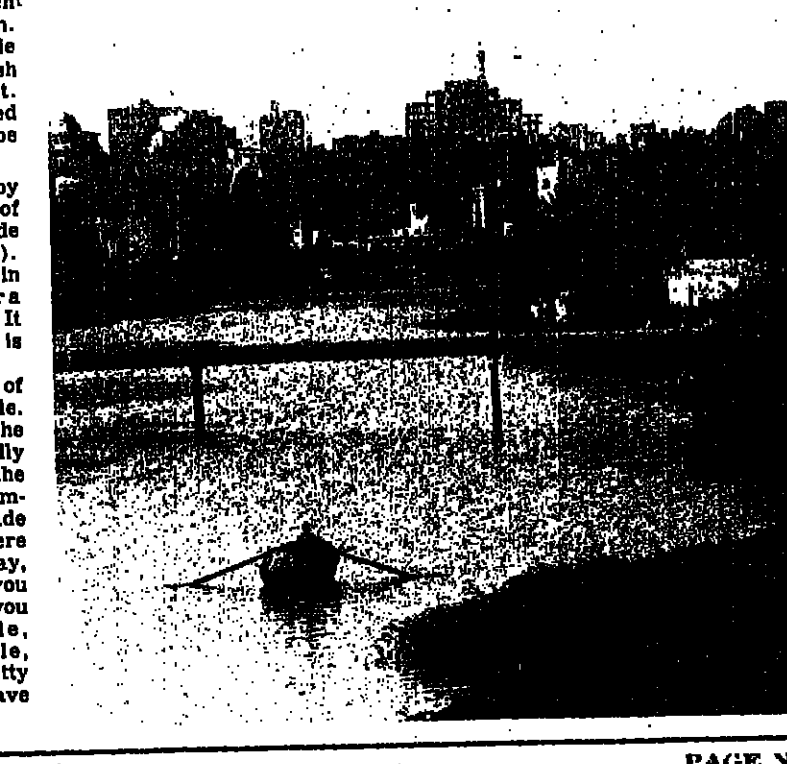
The Third Pyramid was built in the reign of Menkaure (Mycerinus), the son of Chephren. It extends only 62 m. skywards and is an altogether inferior thing.

The (empty) funeral chambers of the pharaohs are now accessible. The easiest one to get into is in the Great Pyramid (it was supposedly here that Hitler got his idea for the chamber where he used to commune with himself before he made his speeches in Nuremberg). There is a long, low, sloping passageway, dimly lit, and handrails to help you along. Don't attempt to go in if you suffer from heart trouble, claustrophobia, back trouble, high blood pressure, etc. It's pretty dark, stuffy and tiring — you have

(Continued overleaf)



(Above) The Khan el Khalili market (Rubinger). (Below) The Sphinx and Great Pyramid. (Bottom) Boating near Cairo's Roda Island. (Lobell)



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(continued from page 9)

to cover longish distances bent double to avoid knocking your head. The commonly rehearsed wisdom has it that the pyramids were constructed willingly by devoted subjects as sepulchres for their pharaohs, in an attempt to preserve their bodies since they believed in resurrection and immortality.

In his much read and ridiculed *Chronicle of the Gods*, Erich von Daniken suggests that the pyramids were built by astronauts or "gods" from outer space. One need not accept his view, however, before acknowledging the validity of the questions he asks. How were the massive stone blocks (2,000,000 of them, some weighing 12 tons) cut out of the quarries, let alone moved from the quarries to the site, hundreds of kilometres away? How were they joined together to the thousandth of an inch? How were the lombs carved out of the rock? Where did the builders acquire the skills they needed for the maze of galleries and rooms and the sloping shafts they constructed?

The oft-repeated answer is that the Pharaoh Khufu (Cheops) had hundreds of thousands of slaves, builders and craftsmen at his disposal. But von Daniken points out, "Today in the twentieth century, no architect could build a copy of the Pyramid of Cheops, even if the technical resources of every continent were at his disposal."

Consider the following: The height of the Great Pyramid multiplied by a thousand million equals 98 million miles — the distance between the earth and the sun. The area of the base of the pyramid divided by twice its height gives the celebrated figure $\pi = 3.14159$. The rocky ground on which the pyramid stands was accurately levelled. Calculations of the weight of the earth were found here. A meridian running through the pyramids divides continents and oceans into two equal halves.

Then there are those who believe that the pyramid shape itself is therapeutic; that living plants thrive within the pyramid shape; that the pyramid helps to control pain and is a powerful rejuvenator, as well as being good for your sex life and sharpening your razor blades. Books along these lines verge on the crackpot but are readable, as the cliché says.

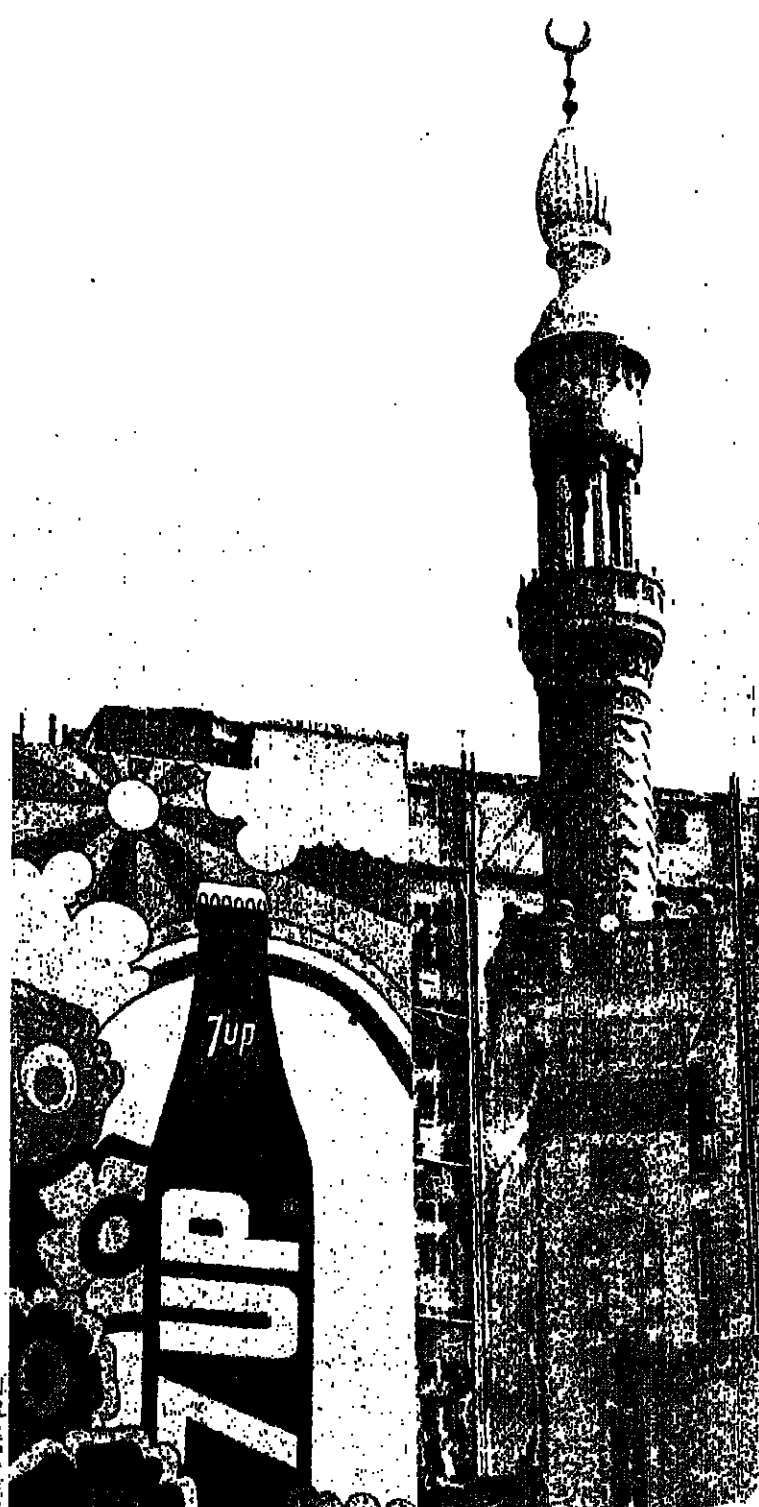
The Sound and Light Show (Sat., Mon. and Wed. in English) is organized by the Ministry of Culture. It costs ELS (or \$9 if you are on an organized tour) and is a little like a Hollywood production, with the Sphinx instead of the MGM lion. The pyramid, says the text (which is read by an imitation Richard Burton), were built by farmers who appreciated the privilege of building these massive tombs and thought they would have things easier in the afterlife because of their devotion to the pharaoh — when the power and mystique of the pharaohs declined, they stopped building pyramids. There is no mention of Jews or Judaism in this version of the story. Clearly, the script was written before Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem.

The Sphinx (or Abu el Hul, the "father of Terror") is a lion couchant with a king's head (it dates to the 4th Dynasty; some say it resembles the Pharaoh Cheops). It is 70m. long and 20 m. high and was cut out of solid rock, only parts of it being added in the form of stone blocks. There is an altar between the paws, and a stele of Pharaoh Tutmosis IV before its breast. There are two small altars in front of it, one of them dating from Roman times. The Sphinx and the three pyramids of Giza were considered among the seven wonders of the ancient world.

In his *Antimémoires*, André Malraux revealed that he traced his ideas about art to his first sight of the Great Sphinx (when it was partially buried in sand and had not yet been prettied up by



The Step Pyramid at Sakkara. (Below) East meets West in Cairo. (Nowits).



archaeologists). "It was then that I distinguished two languages which for thirty years I had been hearing as one," wrote Malraux. "The language of appearance, the language of a crowd which no doubt resembled what I saw in Cairo — the language of the ephemeral. And the language of truth, of the eternal and sacred."

A ticket for the Sphinx and pyramids costs ELS.

Before leaving this area, you could drop in at the Sphinx Papyrus Exhibition (Abu el Houli St., Tel. 853301) and see how papyrus paper was made. There is no entrance fee; the place is open every day.

MEMPHIS AND SAKKARA

These sites are about 25 km. away from Cairo. They may be reached by organized bus tour (the easy way); by train to El-Badrashein (15 minutes second class) and then by donkey or horse to Memphis; by taxi (about ELS10 there and back; drivers are usually very good about the time they allow you for sightseeing). On the way you will pass fishermen's villages; see their felukas (sailboats) on the river, and the mud huts many of the peasants still live in (which must be very similar to the homes of the ancient Israelites). Oxen and other primitive methods are still used to cultivate the land, draw water and so on.

Memphis, the ancient capital of the united kingdom of Upper and Lower Egypt, reached the peak of its development under the kings of the Old Kingdom. At one point it had a population of about half a million; it was still a place of consequence in the 4th century CE. This is where the biblical plagues started and the river turned to blood (see Exodus 7-13 and Hosea 9). Today hardly anything remains except an 80-ton Alabastrer Sphinx and a damaged colossus of Ramses II.

As you leave Memphis the green of the cultivated land stops abruptly and you find yourself in the desert; the road takes you to the plateau of Sakkara, the principal necropolis of Memphis.

The Step Pyramid of Djoser, the first of the 3rd Dynasty kings, is the first massive stone edifice known in history. This mastaba (earliest type of tomb of architectural significance, with a shaft leading to an underground burial chamber) has six steps, each terrace being indented about 2 m. It is made of soft limestone and has been damaged considerably by the elements. The Step Pyramid was the prototype of the pyramids and formed the centre of a complex designed by the architectural wizard Imhotep. With its temples, colonnades, chapels and courts it was one of the most impressive monuments of its time. Nearby are the pyramids of Unas and Oserkat, and the mastabas of Mereruka, Ti and Ptahotep, as well as the Serapoum or tomb of the bull Ape. Visitors who wish to go down into the Step Pyramid should note that it involves a cramped and claustrophobic crawl and that it is not lit up. If you don't have a torch, you could ask one of the watchmen to go before you with a lamp; those at the tail end of the group will be in darkness. Anyone with any sort of circulatory problem should not go down.

OLD CAIRO

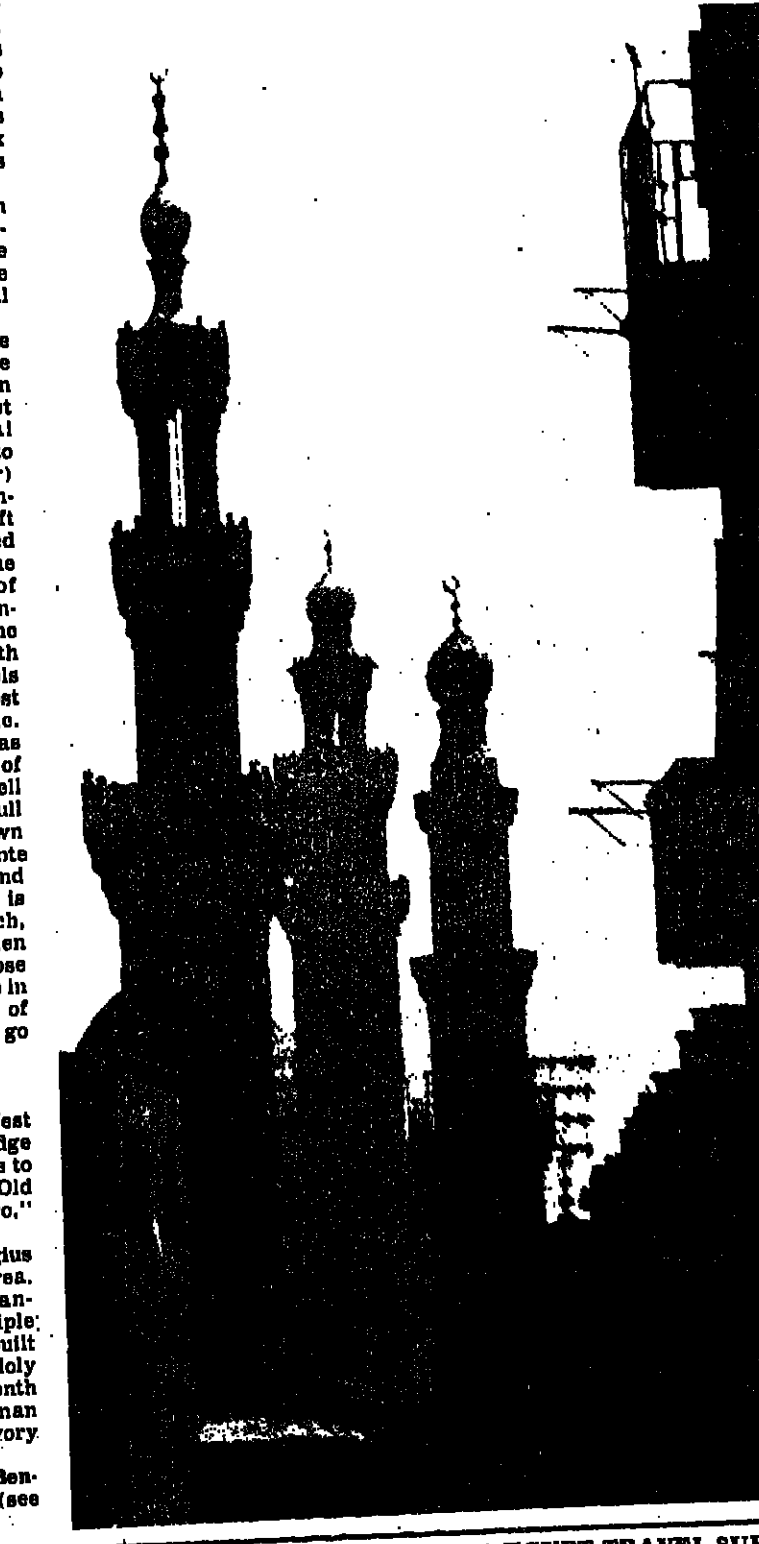
If you're coming from the West Bank of the Nile, cross Giza Bridge to El Roda Island and then cross to the eastern bank of the Nile and Old Cairo (Fustat; see "Jewish Cairo," below).

The Coptic Church of St. Sergius could be your first stop in this area. It is a 6th century Egyptian basilica (with a triple nave and a raised transept) built above the crypt in which the Holy Family took refuge for a month while Joseph worked in the Roman fortress. There is a wood and ivory carving of the Nativity.

Behind the church is the Ben-Ezra or Geniza Synagogue (see "Jewish Cairo").



Alabastrer Sphinx in Memphis. (Nowits). (Below) Cairo minarets. (Lobell).



The Church of St. Barbara (which is also close to the synagogue) dates to the 7th century. The icon panel is impressive; the carved church furniture may be seen in the nearby Coptic Museum. This museum began as a private collection in 1908 and holds the richest collection of Coptic artworks in the world. The exhibits cover a period of almost a thousand years and include architectural fragments, frescoes, textiles, ivory objects, toys, glassware, pottery, paintings, woodwork, metalwork and manuscripts (see the Gospel in Arabic and the Codex of a 2nd-3rd century Gnostic library).

The Amir Ibn el As Mosque (in this area). This is where the first mosque in the city was built (in 642), by Amir el As, the Arab conqueror of Egypt who was general-in-chief of the Caliph Omar. It was also the first Islamic university. Destroyed by fire in 1189, it was reconstructed by Saladin. A hundred years later it was destroyed by earthquake; when it was rebuilt, again it was enlarged. Two hundred of the 365 columns in the prayer room have been preserved. It is used for services only once a year, on the last Friday of Ramadan. It is said that the well in the courtyard is connected underground to the sacred fountain in Mecca.

ISLAMIC CAIRO. (We're still on the East Bank of the Nile, but further north; the western side comprises the "modern" districts. If you're walking from the centre, go down Kasr el Nil St. or Al Bustan St. and ask for Al Azhar St.)

The Khan el Khalili market dates to the 14th century CE and is one of the great Oriental bazaars in the world. The shops and stalls here offer for sale an enormous collection of silverware, brassware, leather goods, textiles (cotton, etc.) and other local items.

Adjacent to the bazaar is the well-known Al Azhar Mosque and University. The first Fatimid mosque in Cairo, Al Azhar comprises a complex of buildings erected during different eras. It is a world centre of Islamic tradition. The university is one of the oldest in the world; its first class gathered in 975 CE. It is famous as the school of Imams, political revolutionaries and religious reformers. Women must dress modestly here. The entrance is on Azhar St., through the Gate of the Barbers (you also have Soup Gate, the Gate of the Jewellers, the Gate of the Syrians, the Gate of the Barber, and the Gate of the Upper Egyptians). Don't miss the 80,000-volume library in the Madrasa al-Akbughawiyah.

The Salah al Din Citadel, Cairo's landmark, is a mountain fortress built in the 12th century CE with stones from small pyramids. It was meant to dominate Cairo from the Mokattam Hills. And it does. It includes the Alabastrer Mosque, construction on which began in 1250 under Muhammad Ali (who is buried here) and was completed by Said in 1857. Alabastrer marble covers its interior and exterior walls. Walk around the mosque and take in the tremendous views of the city below. There are men who tie the cloth coverings over your shoes before you enter the mosque. They expect a 10-25 piastre tip.

The Museum of Islamic Art, Ahmed Maher Sq. (near the Military Museum and National Library). Although tourists seldom find it, this museum deserves a special visit. Its 23 rooms hold the most comprehensive collection of Islamic art anywhere (30,000 exhibits, covering 12 centuries and years from the Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid and Mamluke periods, among others). The rare Turkish books and the artworks (mainly ceramics) from Persia in themselves more than justify a visit. Don't speed by the carpets on the walls. The Arab Library is on the first floor.

Other places of (Islamic) interest: the Sultan Hassan Mosque; the Eastern Cemetery of the Mamlukes; the Ibn Tulun Mosque

(19th century; designed by a freed Christian who used the Ka'ba in Mecca as his model).

MODERN SITES

Cairo Tower (Gezira Island, facing the Nile Hilton); more than 180 m. high; restaurant and cafeteria at the top. The view is, as you might imagine, exceptional.

Cairo University (Giza) and the American University in Cairo (Midan El Tahrir) are open to visitors who want to meet Egyptian students or foreigners studying in Egypt.

The following places have permanent exhibitions of Egyptian art: The Gallery of Fine Arts; the Faculty of Fine Arts (Gezira Island); the Museum of Mukhtar (Gezira Island); and the Museum of Mahmoud Khalil.

JEWISH CAIRO

When in 641 CE Amir Ibn el As, the Arab conqueror of Egypt, founded the city of Fustat that was to develop into Cairo, there were already Jews in the area. During the 10th century many Jews arrived from Mesopotamia and the result was two distinct Jewish communities: the Mesopotamian (Karaites) and the Palestinian. The Palestinian synagogue of Elijah the Prophet was built in the 8th century on the ruins of a church that the Copts were forced to sell to the Jews by King Ibn Tulun. It was rebuilt a thousand years later. This is where the famous Geniza was found, in the attic of what is today known as the Ben Ezra Synagogue (see below). The Mesopotamian synagogue was nearby. During the Fatimid period, Cairo stretched north of Fustat and the Jews developed their quarter between the river and Al Azhar. When Benjamin of Tudela pitched up he claimed to have found 1,000 Jews in Cairo, about 5,000 more than the actual number. In the 12th century the Egyptians turned Fustat to prevent the Crusaders from taking it, whereupon the remaining Jews moved north to the new city.

Jews suffered with the Christians whenever there was persecution of non-Muslims (in 1265, 1301, 1316, 1354, 1442, and so on).

In 1481 there were 800 Jewish families in Cairo, as well as 150 Karaite families. There were five synagogues. With the influx of refugees from Spain in the 15th century, new divisions were created among the Cairo Jews and there was resentment of the superior Spanish scholars.

The Turks conquered Egypt in the 16th century and were generally tolerant towards Jews; local Moslems, however, were not, and persecution continued.

During the early 19th century and Muhammad Ali's era, the Jews had the freedom to develop culturally and commercially.

By 1898, there were 11,500 Jews in the city, including 1,000 Karaites. By the end of World War I there were about 25,000 altogether. This was a time of movement from the old Jewish quarter to the new suburbs of Helipolia, Garden City and Zamalek. The 1947 census recorded 41,800 Jews in Cairo. Many of them were arrested in 1948-49 (during the war against Israel), and deportations occurred in 1956 (after the Sinai Campaign). (The Lavon Affair was in 1954, when two Jews were condemned to death for spying for Israel. There was large-scale emigration during the late '50s.

After the Six Day War, there were only 1,500 Jews left in Cairo; two years later this number dropped to a few hundred. The capital's current Jewish population is about 200 (most of them over 85), and includes 42 Karaites (see "Karaite Synagogue" below). There are a half-a-dozen Ashkenazim. At one time they had their own synagogue (there was even a Yiddish theatre here). Today they pray with the Sephardim.

(Continued overleaf)

(Continued from page 11)

The Jewish cemetery at Bassatine (Cairo) has been badly desecrated. Just when one is about to remark that there is a long tradition of looking graves in this country, one is reminded that the Jewish cemetery in Alexandria has been impeccably maintained (thanks to the efforts of the local community and the Alexandria governorate).

Of the 13 synagogues in Cairo, only three could be said to be more or less functioning today: the Great Synagogue; a synagogue in the northern suburb of Heliopolis; the Karaites Synagogue in Abbasia. The others have either been turned into mosques (such as the Nave Shalom Synagogue) or are simply abandoned. The most famous is the Ben-Ezra Synagogue, which is not used for services but should be seen. The daily life of the Egyptian Jew improved dramatically after Sadat visited Jerusalem in November 1977.

The Ben-Ezra ("Prophet") Synagogue (also called the Geniza Synagogue) in the Old City, near the first Coptic church in Egypt. The synagogue itself was built in 882 CE on the ruins of a Coptic church. It was rebuilt in 1890, but the attic which served as the repository or geniza was untouched. The shamesh, Nathan Abraham Moses, tells visitors that "Moshe Rabenu was brought here after he was found somewhere along where the Suez Canal is today." It is an established fact, however, that Malmonides and his son Abraham and other luminaries taught here. The shamesh kisses the mezuzah over the sealed door of the synagogue, and correctly guesses where various visitors are from. He shows them down a darkened stairway to what used to be the mikve. At the gate a man of indeterminate faith sells large colorful knitted skullcaps. If you can persuade the shamesh to let you inside the synagogue you'll find mouldy *hillul* and decayed scrolls. All the important manuscripts — which included the Hebrew original of the Book of Ben Sira, and fragments from Aquila's Greek translation of the Bible, have been transferred to libraries in England and elsewhere.

The Sha'are Hashamayim Synagogue or the Great Synagogue (the "Adli Synagogue"), at 17 Adli St. in downtown Cairo, is the process of being restored with \$700,000 donated by the World Synagogue Federation in Geneva. It was designed by an Italian architect, Branchi, and built around 1905. The cupola is 22 m. high. Friday evening and Saturday services are held in a side room. The locals often can't raise a minyan without tourists — many of the Israelis who drop in are secular types who would seldom be seen entering a synagogue at home. There is no rabbi — one Mordechai serves as cantor and leads services. The synagogue is maintained by Cairo's Jewish Community Council (13 Rue Sebti el Hazemdar), which also takes care of community property.

Karaites Synagogue (in the northeastern suburb of Abbasia). There are about 40 Karaites Jews in Cairo — in 1948 there were 10,500 (practically all of them emigrated). The community owns the Ben Asher Codex, which they say is the oldest existing complete Tora. It was written in Tiberias in the 8th century. The Karaites maintain that it was copied from the "Mother of all Toras," the 5000-year-old copy written in Hebrew and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs which was given by King Solomon to Egypt's pharaoh when he married his daughter. The codex is kept in a huge safe in the synagogue and only brought out on special occasions. The Karaites set was founded in the 8th century CE in Mesopotamia. Followers believe only in the Torah and reject the oral tradition of Judaism.

ZEITOUN. In a cleft of its own in the suburb of Zeitoun — between

Heliopolis (where Nasser is buried) and Shubra, on the road to the airport — is a church that could become the Fatima/Lourdes of the Middle East. Coptic cannot speak of the place without being visibly moved. What happened there? "Miracle. Mary came to visit us in Egypt," you will be told. Why? "To make people return to God."

On the night of April 2, 1988, mysterious lights appeared above the central dome of the Coptic Church of St. Mary on Tomanbey Street in Zeitoun. They were first spotted by mechanics working late in the garage across the road, who thought it was a white-robed nun about to jump off the roof. The priest who was summoned realized immediately what was happening; soon a large crowd gathered to watch what seemed to be an apparition of the Virgin Mary. The lights continued to appear until early 1971, not only in the form of Mary, but also of Joseph and Jesus. They were seen by hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps millions, of varied religious backgrounds, all of whom were affected in one way or another. Moslems converted to Christianity. Hundreds of sick people were spontaneously healed. Dr. Abdel El Malik of the Faculty of Medicine at Ain Shams University headed a study which looked like miraculous cures and concluded that various types of cancer, thyroid disease, arthritis, hypertension, nephritis, asthma and so on had been instantly cured. The Egyptian government had some old buildings adjacent to the church torn down to make room for apartments and began to charge admission. Today, almost a decade since the apparitions became less distinct and disappeared, cures are still reported at the site. The easiest way to get there is by taxi (about EL5 there and back, from the centre of the city).

ACCOMMODATION

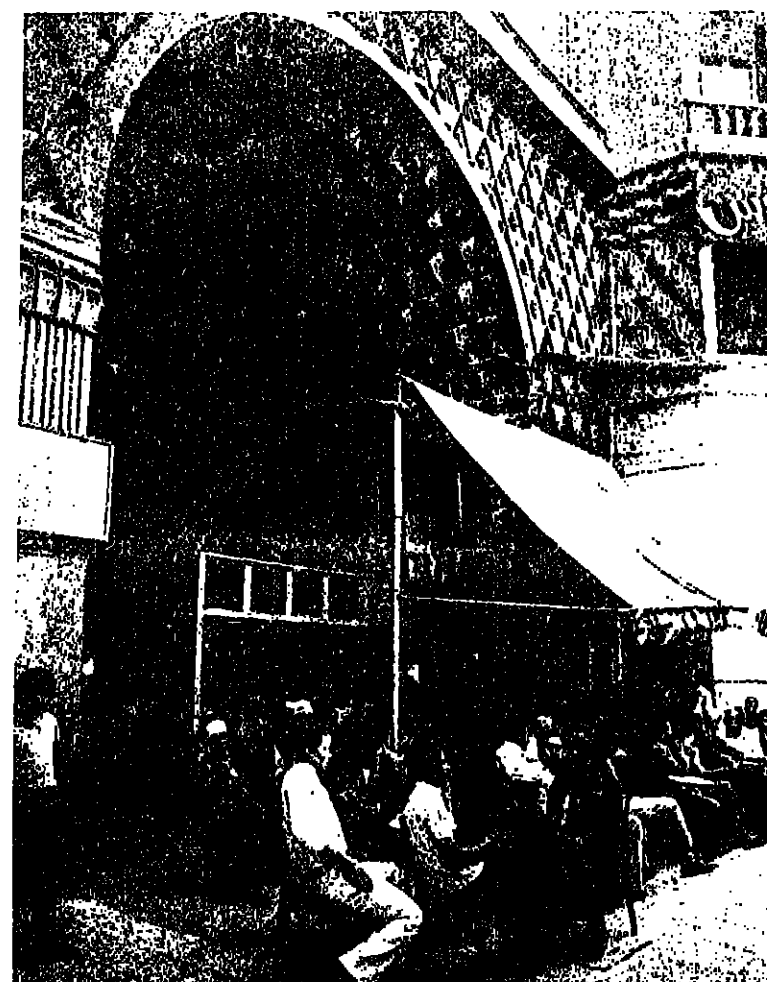
What you spend depends entirely on your standards and budget. Whether you pay EL1 or EL50 a night will be largely governed by the sort of plumbing you can live with. The younger and not so fussy travellers are comfortable paying between EL2.5 and EL4 for a room without a private bath or toilet. These rooms are often clean. The shared toilets, however, are never spartan. And even if you get a room with a private bath, the bathroom won't always pass your Jewish mother's cleanliness test. Some people share a room for two for EL4 or a room for three for EL4. Perfectly adequate, clean rooms are available for EL2 to EL12 in old hotels that were in the luxury class decades ago.

There is usually no shortage of hotel rooms except in the exclusive establishments, where advance bookings are necessary. It is easier to get accommodation in mid-summer, for obvious reasons. The lower priced hotels, in addition to serving medium and low budget travellers, also accommodate Egyptian businessmen and families; some serve as boarding houses for students.

Reception clerks do not mind if you ask to look at rooms and bathrooms. Check that the sheets are clean and ask if and when there is hot water and if there is a shower. In Cairo, the higher the floor of your room, the further from the street you are and the quieter it is at night. Many of the cheaper hotels occupy the upper floors of commercial premises.

Most hotels include breakfast in the price. Breakfast consists of bread, butter, tea, fruit, jam, and sometimes white salt-chicken. For an additional 10 or 15 piastres you can get eggs. Ask if you're paying for bed and breakfast. Also ask if the price includes all taxes.

Friends stayed in the Lunapark, Nitocris, Solent and the Hotel Des Roques. All satisfactorily. I heard good things about the Opera House, the Continental, and the Windsor. All these hotels are in the



(Above) Outdoor restaurant in downtown Cairo. (Below) The original Group restaurant on Midan Talaat Harb. (Lobell). (Bottom) Cairo at dawn. (Nowita).



downtown area, between Tahrir and Opera Squares. Being downtown is of course convenient — nearby are the Egyptian Museum, the shopping centre, the huge shuk, Khan el Khalili, and the main bus station.

I stayed at the Pharaoh's (12 Loufi Hassan St., a couple of blocks away from the Sheraton on Giza Bridge Square). It was just far enough from the centre (across the river) to make it inconvenient to walk there; but the spaciouse room and the extraordinary helpfulness and friendliness of the staff more than compensated for this. The hotel's kitchen is currently being prepared for the serving of kosher meals. It will be the only establishment in Cairo to offer this facility. (Observant Jews in Egypt until now have had to limit themselves to salads and eggs, and tinned foods that they brought with them. Kosher airline meals are available for those who can pay for them.)

***Hilton, Nile Corniche, Tel. 730056, 740777. Telex 92222 UN. 400 rooms with bath. Single EL30; double EL33; suite EL110-EL120. Gambling casino, swimming pool, night club, and direct telephone line to Israel. Sheikh and princes from all over the Arab world stay here.

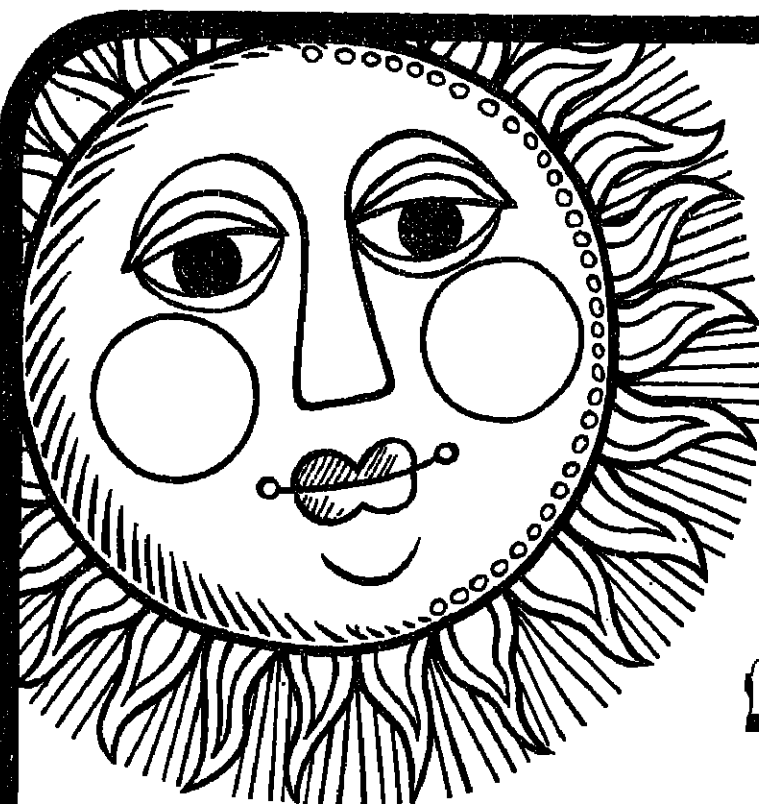
***Sheraton, Giza 93041 SHERA Sq. Tel. 930000. Telex 92041 SHERA. 400 rooms with bath. Single EL30; double EL33; suite EL110-EL120. Gambling casino, swimming pool, night club, and direct telephone line to Israel.

***Rehab, 4 Giza St., Tel. 730056, 740777. Telex 92222 UN. 400 rooms with bath. Single EL30; double EL33; suite EL110-EL120. Gambling casino, swimming pool, night club, and direct telephone line to Israel.

***Shopkeepers, Nile Corniche. Tel. 33800/33900. Telex 379 SHEPOT UN. 290 rooms with bath. Single EL10-21; double EL23-50-EL25.50; suite EL77-EL109. Old, well known, once elegant; has all sorts of literary and historical associations — it's name is practically synonymous with Cairo. Phones don't always work in the rooms; service polite but sporadic.

***Pana House "Oberoi", Ahram St. A truly elegant hotel facing the pyramids. Tel. 86444/85588. Telex 92310 OB UN. 304 rooms with bath. Single EL24-EL36; double EL28-EL43; suite EL100-EL260. First Egypt-Israel peace talks held here in December 1977.

***Cairo International, Single EL7. EL12. EL13. EL14. EL15. EL16. EL17. EL18. EL19. EL20. EL21. EL22. EL23. EL24. EL25. EL26. EL27. EL28. EL29. EL30. EL31. EL32. EL33. EL34. EL35. EL36. EL37. EL38. EL39. EL40. EL41. EL42. EL43. EL44. EL45. EL46. EL47. EL48. EL49. EL50. EL51. EL52. EL53. EL54. EL55. EL56. EL57. EL58. EL59. EL60. EL61. EL62. EL63. EL64. EL65. EL66. EL67. EL68. EL69. EL70. EL71. EL72. EL73. EL74. EL75. EL76. EL77. EL78. EL79. EL80. EL81. EL82. EL83. EL84. EL85. EL86. EL87. EL88. EL89. EL90. EL91. EL92. EL93. EL94. EL95. EL96. EL97. EL98. EL99. EL100. EL101. EL102. EL103. EL104. EL105. EL106. EL107. EL108. EL109. EL110. EL111. EL112. EL113. EL114. EL115. EL116. EL117. EL118. EL119. EL120. EL121. EL122. EL123. EL124. EL125. EL126. EL127. EL128. EL129. EL130. EL131. EL132. EL133. EL134. EL135. EL136. EL137. EL138. EL139. EL140. EL141. EL142. EL143. EL144. EL145. EL146. EL147. EL148. EL149. EL150. EL151. EL152. EL153. EL154. EL155. EL156. EL157. EL158. EL159. EL160. EL161. 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ISRAELIS should find two weeks in
Egypt sufficient for a preliminary
visit at least. If you have the energy
you could try to crowd most of it
into one week, but then you'll
probably need to rest when you get
back home.

Suggested itineraries for one- and
two-week stays:
One week:
Cairo 3 days
Alexandria 1 day
Luxor, Awan, Abu Simbel 3 days
Two weeks:
Cairo 1 week
Alexandria 2 or 3 days (and
nights)

Luxor 2 or 3 days (depending on
how long you spend in Alexandria)
Awan and Abu Simbel 2 days
If you stay longer, you could go to
the three Canal-zone ports -
Ismailiya, Port Said and Suez.
Divers make for Hurgada, and
war veterans return to El Alamein
(but not in summer, if they know
what they're doing).

LUXOR
Luxor and Karnak with their
well-known temples occupy the site
of the ancient capital of Thebes, on
the east bank of the Nile 674 km.
from Cairo and 232 km. north of
Awan. Thebes was the capital of
Egypt at the height of its power,
during the Middle and New
Kingdoms. Ancient Egyptians con-
nected the east (where the sun
rises) with the land of the living;
the west was the domain of
darkness and the dead. The Valley
of the Kings and Queens was on the
west bank of the Nile at Thebes -
the dead were transported across
the river to their tombs. Thus the
Nile - the source of life - was
simultaneously the river of death.
The grandeur of the monuments on
both sides of the river indicate the
magnitude of the ancient civiliza-
tion.

Luxor depends largely on tourists
for its living. Although there are
only four luxury hotels and three
lesser establishments here, the
place is geared for visitors, with
restaurants along the Nile and
horse-drawn carriages that serve
as taxis. English newspapers are
available, albeit two or three days
late. The street vendors and other
hustlers here are more aggressive,
insistent and insulting than their
brothers in Cairo or further south in
Awan. You can spend two days or
two weeks in Luxor - two days to
see the temples and tombs and take
in the Sound and Light show, two
weeks of relaxation in a peaceful,
beautiful setting. But try to avoid
coming in summer when the
temperatures soar to the mid-40s;
by April-May it is already too hot.
Large riverboats (like Mississippi
steamboats) that sail down the Nile
from Luxor to Awan and back are
often moored by the river bank. In
winter there are a few chartered
cruises from Cairo to Luxor and
Awan. Sooner from Agatha
Christie's *Death on the Nile* were
shot in Luxor. At night, the dusty
streets are alive with people - if
you're lucky you'll see a noisy wed-
ding procession. Those in search of
belly-dancing and more
sophisticated entertainment will
have to go to the bars and night-
clubs of the large hotels.

GETTING TO LUXOR
The train journey from Cairo
takes about 12 hours. The night
trains - there are two - leave
Cairo at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m., and pull
out of Luxor on the return trip at 9
p.m. and 10 p.m. A second-class
" sleeper " costs about \$111 one
way and includes dinner and bed-
ding. First class costs double - you
get a compartment to yourself, but
there's nothing special about the
compartment. Advance booking is
necessary. I wasn't able to get a
return ticket in Cairo. If you don't
mind sitting up all night in a train
that jumps like a bucking bronco,
you could travel without a
" sleeper " for less than half the
above price. The 2nd class com-
partments are extremely uncom-
fortable in summer as they are
sealed for air-conditioning that
doesn't work. So unless you sleep



Ruins of the Karnak Temple reflected in the Sacred Lake. (Below) The Mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Deir el Bahari (across the Nile from Luxor).

Tours from Cairo

with the door open you won't get
enough air. If you take a day train
you won't have this problem;
moreover, you will see something
of the country.
The plane from Cairo takes one
and a half hours and the fare is
IL24.75 one way.

SIGHTSEEING
The sites on the East Bank and the
West Bank can be seen in a day; it
is more pleasant to devote a day to
each side of the river. Young peo-
ple, and those who are not so young
but healthy, hire bicycles and ride
to the sites on their own. If you in-
tend doing this, make sure you have
a good map and enough water to see
you through a gruelling excursion.
None of the "antiquities" offered
for sale at the sites are genuine; if
nevertheless you are willing to buy
them, remember to bargain (you
could end up paying up to a fifth of
the first price quoted).

A tour operator whom I found
helpful in arranging sightseeing
trips and train bookings was Esmile
Wadee of the Esmile Travel Agency
(in the tourist centre near the new
Winter Palace Hotel); he also
arranges tours in Awan, where his
mailing address is P.O.B. 89).

You'll need a guide, especially for
the West Bank.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
Seven thousand years ago Thebes
was the village of Waaset. The first
shrine was built here in 4000 BC, but
the town didn't develop before the
12th dynasty. Amenophis III of the
18th Dynasty built the temple of
Luxor, probably on the site of
another sanctuary, and dedicated it
to the triad of Amun (the patron god
of Thebes), Mut (his wife) and
Khonsu (his son). He then con-
structed a temple over a shrine
begun in Karnak by his ancestor
Sesostris I of the 12th Dynasty. The
small temple of Amun was rebuilt
and this became the giant complex
of Karnak. Amenophis then crossed
to the other side of the Nile and con-
structed an enormous temple
nearby. Amenophis also planted gardens
between the temples of Luxor and
Karnak. Numerous ships - royal
barges, merchant vessels, the
warships - sailed here. The Nile
was the most convenient transpor-

tation route from one end of the
kingdom to the other.

Thebes's power declined after 980
BCE; in 661 BCE the city was
destroyed by Assyrians. It was rebuilt
but destroyed again in 525 BCE by
Cambyses. Despite restoration
work and additional construction
by Egyptian kings of the Ptolemaic
Dynasty, Thebes was never to
regain its importance.
When Diodorus came to Thebes in
57 BCE he found mainly ruins,
though there was still evidence of
its glorious days. He wrote: "In
former times its circumference
was about 12 miles, and it was
adorned with stately public
buildings, magnificent temples
and rich memorials, while some of
its private houses were four to five
storeys high. It was in fact the most
beautiful and most stately city, not
only of Egypt but all the world, for
there was no metropolis under the
sun adorned with such a multiplicity
of monuments of gold, silver and
ivory, and so many multitudes of
colossal obelisks."

Rival pharaohs, earthquakes and
misguided Christians contributed
to the destruction of the city. The
former Akhnaton temple. Entrance
fee.

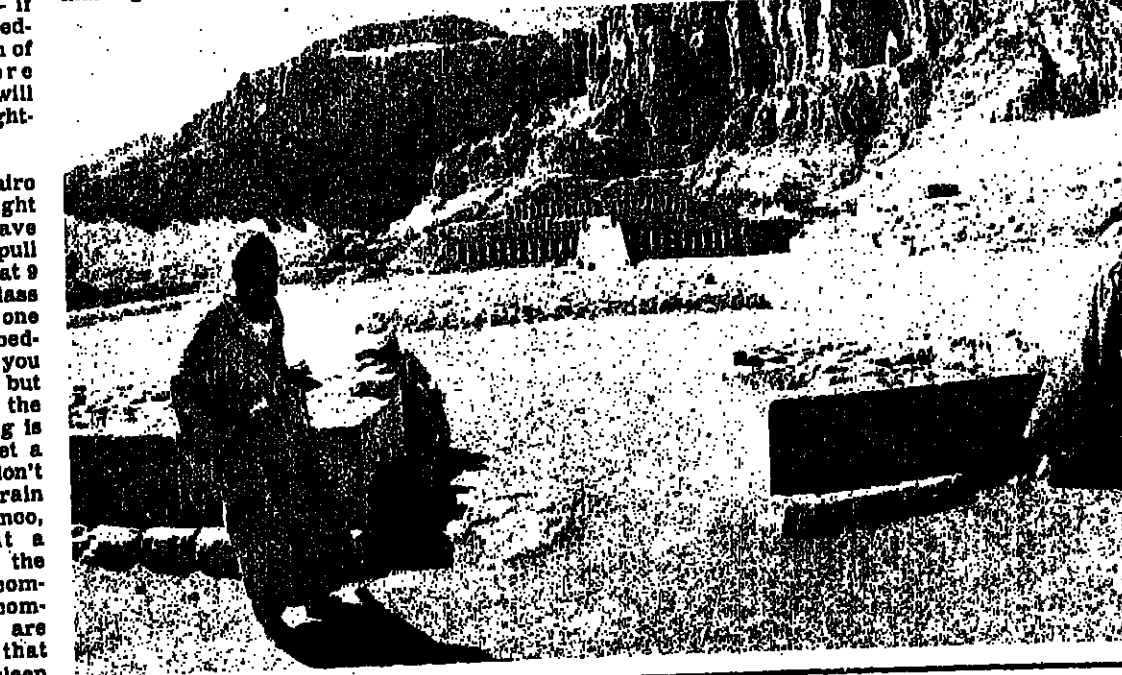
and destroyed sanctuaries. Thebes
became no more than a cluster of
villages. The once magnificent city
was covered over by sand. Villages
arose on the ruins, but they too
collapsed.
When the Arabs arrived in the 7th
century, Luxor was born. They
built on the ruins and removed
relics for their mosques. The
elements continued their inex-
orable erosion. And what we see to-
day is more than what there was
above the surface when
archaeological work began with the
French towards the end of the 18th
century.

The Temple of Luxor. Completely
covered by rubble until less than a
century ago. The original temple
was built by Amenophis III - it
comprised an open court with
colonnades, a great pillared hall,
chapels and a half-completed
pillared hall. Akhnaton erased the
name of Amun and the images of the
gods wherever they appeared;
Tutankhamun destroyed
Akhnaton's nearby solar sanctuary
and completed the great pillared
hall and had the temple walls
decorated. Ramesses II extended
the temple by adding an open court
with many columns and erecting a
massive pylon (at the main en-
trance). Christians later establish-
ed a church here and Moslems built
the mosque of Abul Haggag. En-
trance fee to the temple.

Temple of Karnak. North of Lux-
or. About 20 minutes in a gig from
the tourist centre. Entrance fee.
The sheer scale of the place is
overwhelming. The temple
dedicated to Amun was the most
important in the kingdom; it was
added to by successive pharaohs
and in the end it included a number
of other shrines. The wide Avenue
of Sphinxes takes you to the first
pylon, the main entrance. You may
climb up the tower to the left for a
view of the temple complex. You
will see the Great Court with the
Temple of Ramesses III (to your
right), the second pylon, behind it
the Great Hypostyle Court, then the
third pylon, an obelisk, the fourth
pylon, another pillared hall and
another obelisk (of Hatshepsut).
Towards the very back are the fifth
and sixth pylons, small rooms and
courts and chapels of the Sacred
Sanctuary of the Sacred Barques
and the Great Festival Hall of
Tutankhamun. To the right in the
distance is the Sacred Lake. The
Great Court is the largest of the
Egyptian temple courts; the Great
Hypostyle Hall, known as one of the
ancient wonders of the world, com-
prised 134 gigantic columns in 16
lines supporting the roof, which has
since collapsed. On some of the
capitals and the undersides of the
architraves some of the original
paintwork may still be seen. The
Sound and Light show here is more
or less obligatory.

The Luxor Museum, near the
Etap Hotel, doesn't contain much
but it does have the wall of the
former Akhnaton temple. Entrance
fee.

WEST THEBES
The Valley of the Kings. For a
few plaques a boat takes you across
the river to the burial ground of the
kings and queens. There are land-
ing stages at several points along
the river - the one opposite the
Winter Palace is perhaps the most
convenient. There is a restaurant
near Tutankhamun's tomb in the
Valley of the Kings. The danger
here is of seeing too much rather
than too little. Sixty-four pharaohs'
tombs have been found. These are
some of the more interesting ones:
Tomb of Seti I (19th Dynasty).
The largest, most impressive and
perhaps most interesting tomb (No.
17) in the necropolis. The wall
decorations are remarkably
preserved and exceptional. Note
the zodiac on the ceiling of the inner
chamber.
Tomb of Amenophis
(Amenhotep) II (18th Dynasty).
The builders of this tomb (No. 38)
tried to make it a trap for robbers:
(Continued overleaf)



(Continued from page 16)

the main corridor ends in a pitfall. There is a representation of the heavens on a dark blue background on the ceiling. The walls and pillars are decorated: the mummies of 10 kings (including Amenhotep II) were found here towards the end of the last century.

Tomb of Tutankhamun (18th Dynasty). The first tomb (No. 263) on your right as you enter the Valley of the Kings. It was the only one found that had not been ransacked by grave-robbers. The story of its discovery by Howard Carter is very well known. Read Carter's own account of it and C.W. Ceram's *Gods, Graves and Scholars* before coming. Carter found a clay seal and a box bearing the cartouche of Tutankhamun and concluded that the (then) little-known young king was buried in the area. The chambers of the tomb are comparatively small; the treasures are now in the Cairo Museum; the gold-masked mummy of the king lies in situ. See the Apes of the Sun on the wall behind his head.

Other Tombs: **Rameses VI** (20th Dynasty); unusual and notable wall-drawings, No. 9; **Haremheh** (19th Dynasty); No. 33; **Tutmosis III** (18th Dynasty); line drawings and hieroglyphs which require explanation; No. 34; **Rameses III** (20th Dynasty); No. 11.

Valley of the Queens. More than 57 tombs discovered here. The art work in the Tomb of Nefertiti (wife of Rameses II; No. 66) is outstanding. Permission required to see it — ask your travel agent or the Government Tourist Office in Luxor.

Tomb 55, of Prince Amenherkhephet, has well preserved paintings of Rameses III and the goddess Isis, and of the king introducing his son to the god Ptah.

The area where Tutankhamun's tomb was discovered in the Valley of the Kings.

(Nowitz.)

The drawings in the tomb of Queen Titi (c. 20th Dynasty) have been damaged but should nonetheless be seen.

The Tombs of the Nobles and priests in the courts of the pharaohs are famous for their wall drawings and paintings depicting daily life in their time. The important tombs are in the hills between the Ramesseum, Dair el Medina and Dair el Bahari. If you have time, visit at least one or two of the following: **Nakht** (No. 52; scribe of the granaries); **Rameses** (No. 56; Ahmose's prime minister); **Merneptah** (No. 64; finance official under Tutmosis IV).

Dair el Bahari, or the Mortuary Temple of Queen Hatshepsut (18th Dynasty), sits majestically at the foot of towering cliffs. There is an entrance fee. Its terraced and colonnaded plan made it architecturally unique in ancient Egypt. Upon Hatshepsut's death, her nephew Tutmosis attempted to obliterate all traces of her, defacing her image wherever it appeared. The chapel dedicated to the goddess Hathor is well preserved; the statue of Hathor that once stood here is now in the Cairo Museum.

Ramesseum. The mortuary temple of the nonagenarian Rameses II (19th Dynasty) is one of the largest temples in the country. If you're on your own you should allow yourself more than an hour in the colonnaded courts; examine the wall drawings, and the (fallen) head from the largest statue of Rameses (or Rammy-baby number-two-o, as one American called him) in Egypt. It was cut from a single block. Entrance fee.

Medinet Habu. South of the Valley of the Kings, this is Rameses III's colossal mortuary temple. Considered second only to Karnak in importance. Two of the temples were actually built by Rameses.

one was built by Amenhotep I and the fourth by Queen Amenartas. **Dair el Medina.** South of the Valley of the Kings, on the road to the Valley of the Queens. Temple to goddesses Hathor and Maat; built by Ptolemy IV. The murals help one understand the funerary rites of the period (c. 210 BCE). Inside a circle of 42 Judges of the Dead presided over by Osiris, Horus and Anubis weigh the heart of the deceased.

Colossi of Memnon — on the way back to the Nile. See section entitled "Historical Background."

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*** Luxor Hotel. Opposite the Luxor Temple. Tel. 2405. Double

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*** Philips. Nefertiti St. Tel. 2284. Double EL40; suite EL42.

*** Heron. Karnak Temple St. Tel. 2185. Single EL2.40, double EL2.40 - EL4.50.

RESTAURANTS. Your best bet is

in the hotels and along the river-

bank. The Marhaba, in the tourist

centre adjacent to the New Winter

Palace, is predictably

good.

ASWAN

The capital of the southernmost

province of Upper Egypt, Aswan

has a population of 200,000. It is

situated 232 km. south of Luxor and

about 806 km. from Cairo. The

Aswan High Dam is 111m. high,

3600m. long across the top and

980m. thick at its base. The top of

the dam wall is 40m. thick. Nasser

Lake stretches 800 km. from the

dam and has a maximum width of

10 km. Aswan is a popular winter

resort; the sands are slightly

radioactive and supposedly good

for skin diseases. President Sadat

has a winter home here.

Getting to Aswan from Luxor by

train takes 4-4½ hrs. and costs

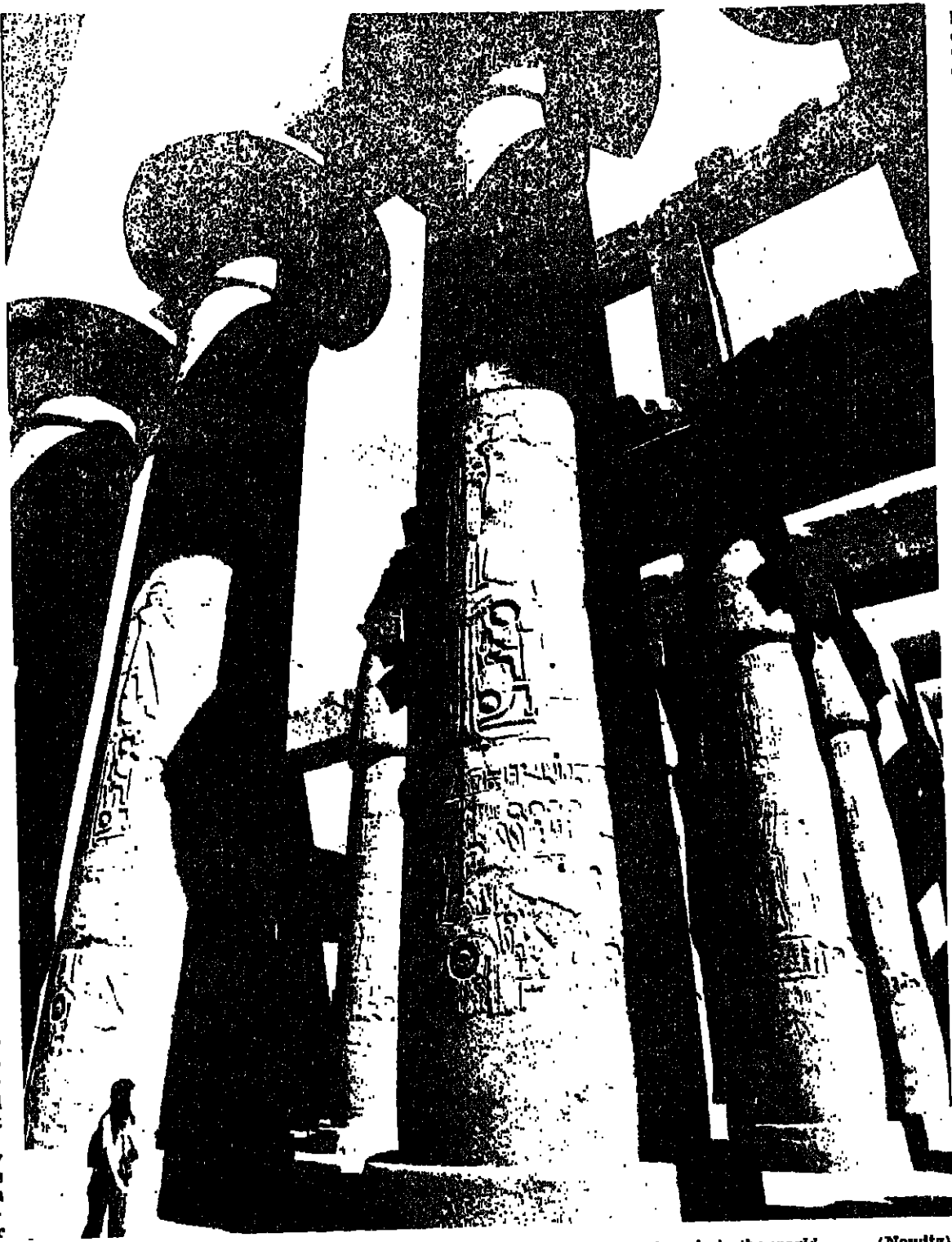
EL1.50 or EL2, depending on

whether you pay for air-

conditioning (which is negligible or

non-existent). The plane fare from

Cairo is EL34.75 one way; from



Pillar in the Hypostyle Hall (Karnak), said to be the largest hall of any temple in the world. (Nowitz.)

Luxor EL10.20. Those who come by car or bus from Luxor should stop to see the temples of Idku and Kom Ombo on the way.

WHAT TO SEE.

The Granite Quarries are on the eastern bank. Red, grey and black stones from these quarries were used for statues and buildings that are found throughout Egypt. Note the half-completed giant obelisk.

Elephantine Island. This was once a fortified frontier post. The 2km.-long island, which is shaped like an elephant, is situated opposite the Cataract Hotel. Visit the museum and the Trajan Temple, and see the Nilometer near the temple.

Under Perisan rule (from 628 BCE) there was a colony of Jewish mercenaries on the island, as well as a community of Jews who were not part of the military establishment. They built an impressive temple here which was destroyed in 411 BCE. The Elephantine papyrus discovered at the beginning of the 20th century included legal papyrus in Aramaic that shed light on the life of the Jews on the island.

Island of Philae. The drop in the water level with the opening of the High Dam led to the surfacing of the Temple of Isis. This temple, the work of Ptolemy III and Ptolemy IV, was never completed.

Monastery of St. Simeon. Left bank of the Nile. A good 30-40 minute drive. This well-preserved Coptic monastery dates to the 7th century; abandoned in the 18th century because of unsatisfactory water supply.

The Rock-Out Tombs on the West Bank are those of the relatives of the ruling house and nobles of the Old and Middle Kingdoms.

Aswan Dam (see introduction to Aswan).

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ine Island. Tel. 3455. Single EL28-

EL40; double EL27-EL40.

**** Cataract. Abtal Al Tahrir St.

Tel. 2233. Single EL18-EL21; double

EL10-EL43; suite EL27.50-EL30.

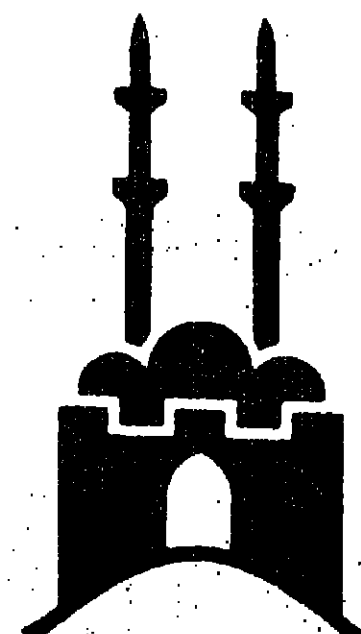
**** Kalabash. Abtal Al Tahrir St.

Tel. 2666. Double EL10-EL14.

**** Amun. Amun Island. Tel. 2655. Double EL10-EL11.

**** Abu Simbel. Corniche El Nil. Double EL6.50-EL7.70.

(Continued overleaf)



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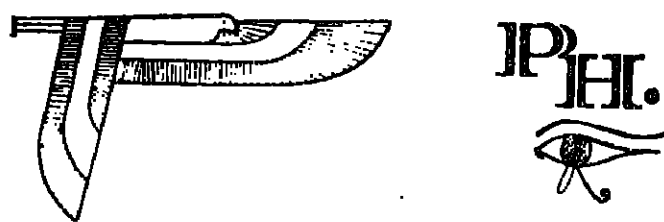
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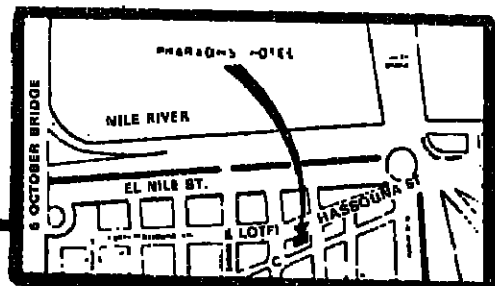
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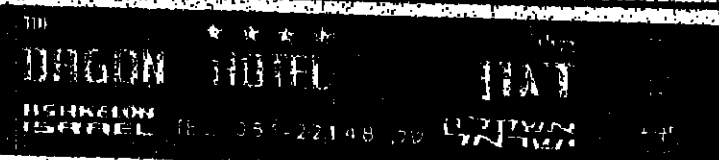


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(Continued from page 17)

• Nile City, Abtal Al Tahrir St. Tel. 2844. Single EL3.85; double EL4.50-EL6.00.
• Philae, Corniche El Nil St. Tel. 2117. Single EL3.75; double EL3.50.
• Haby, Abtal Al Tahrir St. Tel. 2028. Double EL4-EL5; suite EL12-EL25.
• Grand Hotel, Abtal Al Tahrir St. Tel. 3282. Single EL2.75-EL3.50; double EL4-EL5.50.
• Hothur, Corniche El Nil. Single EL3-EL3.50; double EL4-EL4.50.

ABU SIMBEL
You can fly or take a boat to Abu Simbel from Aswan. You can also go by hovercraft, if the contraption is in working order.

The flight from Aswan costs EL14.75. This is the easy way. The other way is by boat. This journey (cruise?) takes two days from Aswan to Abu Simbel and two days back. The train from the city to the High Dam costs 5 piastres. The boat costs EL3.50 one way. There is an EL2 tax and an EL2 entrance fee to the temple at Abu Simbel. The total cost this way, from Aswan to Abu Simbel and back, is EL11, without food. Tea is available on the boat; mineral water is sometimes also sold; take your own food and water, there might not be any. You'll also need a sleeping bag.

ACCOMMODATION
• Nefertari, Abu Simbel. Double EL11.50-EL12.50. Meals: breakfast EL1, lunch EL3, dinner EL3.65.

WHAT TO SEE
The Great Temple of Ramses II, with its four colossal seated statues of the king at the entrance, were constructed more than 3000 years ago. International action organized by UNESCO a few years ago protected the temple from the rising waters of the lake by setting them back 180m. from their original emplacement. The temple was dedicated to the Theban god Amun, the sun god Horakhti of Heliopolis, and other principal gods of the country.

The facade of the Large Temple (there is a Small Temple nearby) is an impressive 31m. high. The king is wearing the double crown, the royal head-dress and the cobra which symbolises the burning power of the sun and the royal personage. The baboons at the top of the facade are greeting the rising sun, which, when the temple was at the old site, shone deep into the rock sanctuary at special times of the year. Go past the great pillared hall to the small pillared chamber and the sanctuary. Note the reliefs on the walls and ceilings showing scenes from the king's campaign against the Hittites.

The Small Temple or Temple of Hathor was also carved out of solid rock. Outside there are statues of Ramses, his wife Nefertari (for whom the temple was built), and their children. The Hypostyle Hall inside is supported by six pillars. See the reliefs of the queen at the back of the temple. Early morning is the best time to visit the site.

THE CANAL ZONE: PORT SAID, ISMAILIYA, SUZ.

PORT SAID (300km.) from Cairo sits on a tongue of land between the Mediterranean and Lake Manzala at the entrance to the Suez Canal. It is the second largest port in the country and has a population of more than 100,000. On the seaward side of the 10m. lighthouse there used to be a statue of Ferdinand de Lesseps. Port Said is a cosmopolitan city with many hotels and restaurants.

ACCOMMODATION
• Holiday, Al Gumburia St. Tel. 5166. Single EL3.75-EL4; double EL5.75-EL7.75.

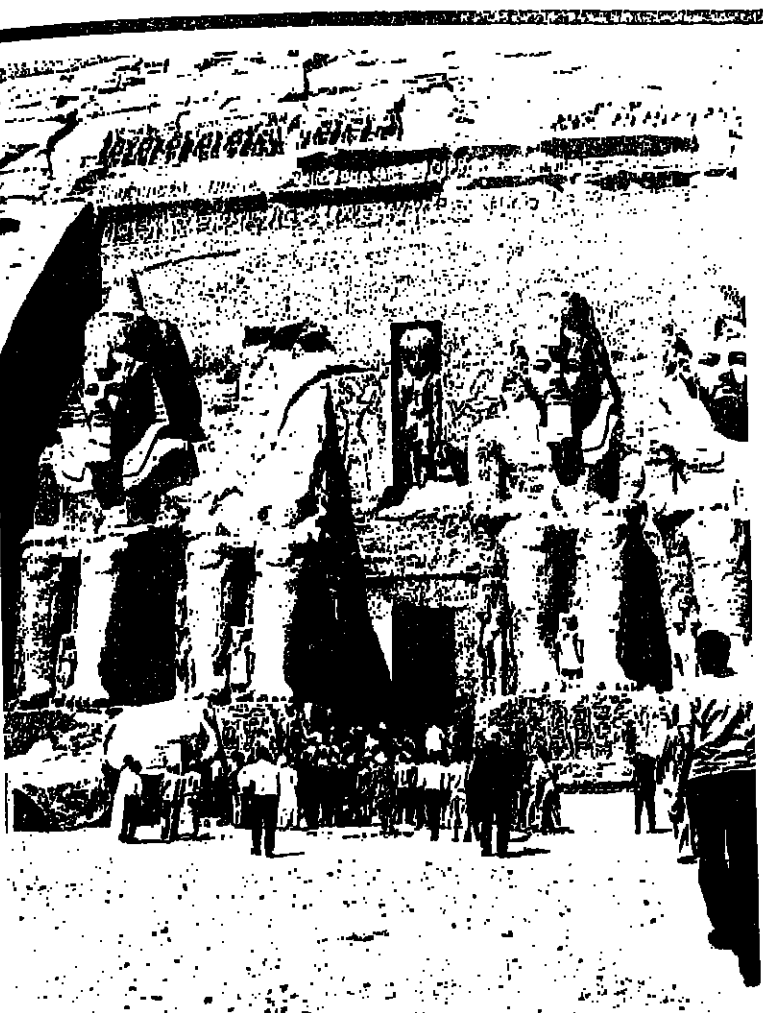
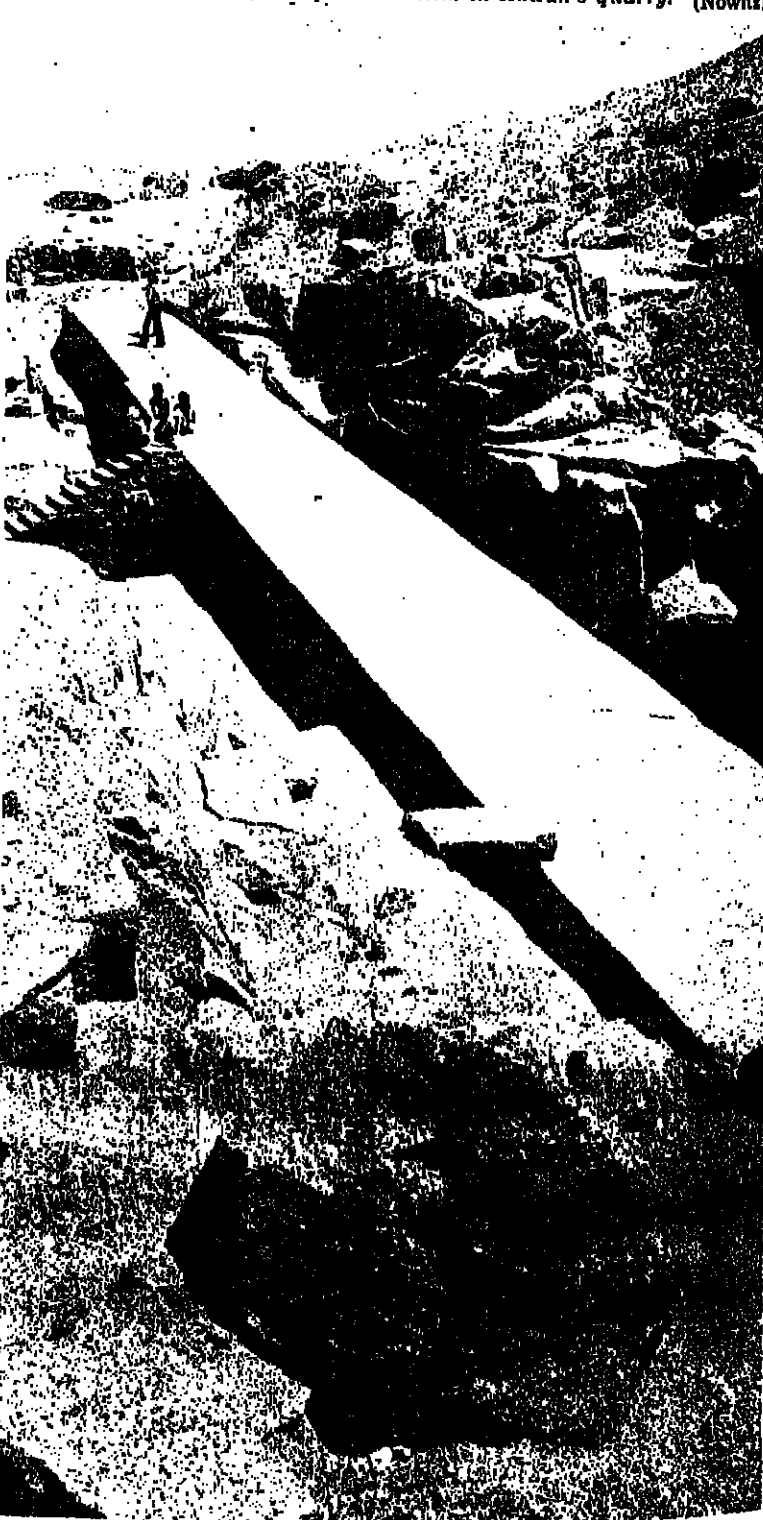
• Vendôme, 27 Al Gumburia St. Tel. 5913. Single EL1.50; double EL3.50-EL4.

• Abu Simbel, 16 Al Gumburia St. Tel. 5166. Single EL3.75-EL4; double EL5.75-EL7.75.

• Grand Hotel, Salah Salim St. Tel. 2780. Single EL3-EL4.50; double EL5.50-EL6.50.



A guide reflects light to illuminate the interior of one of the tombs of the nobles. (Below) The half-completed obelisk in Aswan's quarry. (Nowits)



The Temple of Ramses II at Abu Simbel. (UPI) (Below) Felukas on the Nile at Aswan. (Nowits)



• Regent, 27 Al Gumburia St. Tel. 4682. Double EL2.75-EL3.50.
• Acory, Al Gumburia St. Tel. 8013. Single EL1.55; double EL2.75-EL3.50.
• Al Gahast, 26 July St. Tel. 4588. Double EL2.75-EL3.50.
• Merryland, Degia St. Tel. 272. Double EL3-EL4.

ISMAILIYA
(81km. from Cairo) is where the Suez Canal Authority has its headquarters. It has numerous green parks and woods. Ismailiya is also where each ship crossing the Canal has to change its pilot. The museum has Ptolemaic and Roman artefacts that were found during the cutting of the Canal. About a couple of hundred thousand people live here.

ACCOMMODATION
• Nefertari, 41 Sultan Hussein. Tel. 2522. Double EL4-EL5.

SUEZ
(about 164km. from Cairo) was badly damaged during the Egypt-Israeli war. Reconstruction work began in 1974. The city has about the same population as Port Said and is also situated on a tongue of land. This is where the Suez Canal as a dredged waterway ends and the Red Sea begins. From the pier the view of Asia to the left and Africa to the right is a tremendous one.

ACCOMMODATION
• Port Tawfik. Single EL10; double EL12.

• Beau Rivage, 66 Saad Zaghloul St. Tel. 3885. Single EL2.50; double EL2.50-EL4; suite EL3-EL6.

• Mir Palace, 2 Saad Zaghloul St. Double EL4-EL5.50.

SOUTHWEST OF CAIRO:
EL FAYOUM (102km. from Cairo). An "oasis" that is not strictly an oasis, with a population of a million — mainly Beduin, peasants and fishermen. Several buses leave for Fayoum from the central bus station in Cairo every day.

What To See: The Labyrinth (the mortuary temple of Amenemhat III); Medinet Masadi temple; ruins of Crocodilopolis.

ACCOMMODATION
• Shakhshouk, Shakhshouk. Fayoum. Double EL13, suite EL17.

• El El Seila, 13 Fedeseen. Double EL2.20-EL3.50.

• Auberge Al Fayoum. Overlooking Lake Qarun. Tel. 17. Abukza. Single EL1.55-EL2.25; double EL2.75-EL3.50.

• Pavillon De Chasse. Overlooking Lake Qarun. Tel. 17. Shakhshouk. Single EL2.45; double EL4.50-EL5.50.

NORTHWEST OF CAIRO:
EL ALAMEIN may be reached by train, bus or taxi from Alexandria (about 80km. away). British and Commonwealth war veterans return here to visit the graves of their friends who fell in the 1942 Battle of El Alamein. There is a "Rest House" with a restaurant; the military museum is open in the morning. In the nearby seaside resort of Sidi Abd el Rahman there is the El Alamein Hotel with 10 bungalow annexes.

SOUTHEAST OF CAIRO (FOR DIVING ENTHUSIASTS)
HURGHADA

The flight from Cairo costs EL26.90 one way (double that for the return fare). Situated on the Red Sea about 280km. south of Suez, Hurghada is an excellent spot for scuba diving. The town has an attractive mosque with twin minarets, a "student house" and an Esso guesthouse used by oilmen and engineers working in the area. There is also a Marine Museum and an Aquarium. Israeli divers do not need to be told of the wonderful world under the Red Sea. At the centre of Hurghada Bay there is an enormous coral formation that resembles an island; the sea bed slopes gently to the centre of the bay and swimming is pleasant and safe.

ACCOMMODATION
• Sheraton Hurghada, at the northern end of the bay. Single EL20; double EL22. meals: breakfast 90 piastres; lunch EL3; dinner EL3.50.

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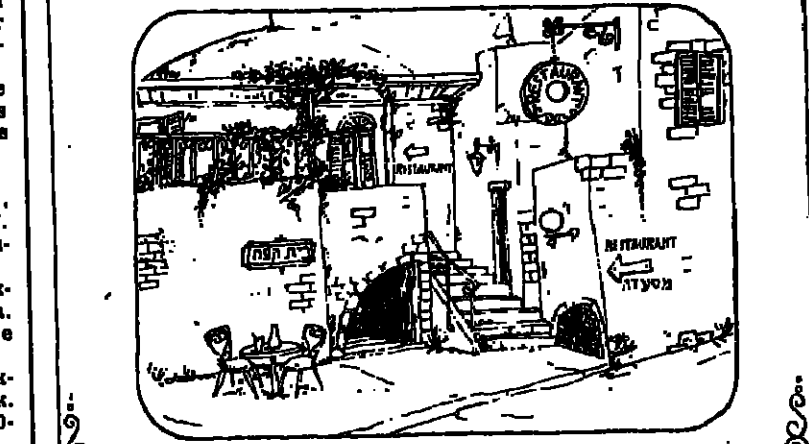
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"ALEXANDRIA is cleaner than Cairo. It rains more often here," said our guide humorously. From what I saw, its slums equal in squalor anything you are likely to find in the oldest parts of the capital.

Stretched out like a lobster on the Mediterranean 218 km. northwest of Cairo, Alexandria (Iskandria) is Egypt's principal port and second largest city. During Julius Caesar's time, it was also the second largest city in the Roman Empire. Today's population of three million increases to five million during the height of the summer season when bourgeois holidaymakers from all over Egypt crowd to its beaches. The western end is the old part, the eastern the new.

Visitors who carry in their minds brightly coloured postcards from Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet* will soon be disappointed by the flat reality of the place. This port city, you may recall, is where Parneswarden, Justine, Nessim, Bathasar, Clea, Darley, Melissa and Pombal played out intense scenes in their (fictional) lives. Alexandria is also where Cleopatra was crowned queen, where she met and loved and lived with Antony, and where they died tragically. The evangelist Mark, who brought Christianity to Egypt, preached in this city. Philo, the great Jewish philosopher, lived here.

Napoleon first set foot in Egypt near Alexandria, and it was here that Nelson defeated the French fleet. During World War II, the battle for Alexandria took place at nearby El Alamein.

Founded by Alexander the Great near the village of Rhakotis in 332 BCE, Alexandria developed into a great centre of Hellenic culture under the rule of the Ptolemies. It is fitting, therefore, that one of the city's greatest poets, C. P. Cavafy, should have been a Greek. But it is Durrell, a lesser talent, perhaps, who is inextricably linked with Alexandria, for the literature of my generation at least.

"Capitally, what is this city of ours?" asks Durrell in *Justine*. "What is resumed in the word Alexandria? In a flash my mind's eye shows me a thousand dust-stormed streets. Flies and beggars own it today — and those who enjoy an intermediate existence between either."

"Five races, five languages, a dozen creeds: five fleets turning through their greasy reflections behind the harbour bar. But there are more than five sexes and only demotic Greek seems to distinguish among them. The sexual provender which lies to hand is staggering in its variety and profusion. Just as you are about to dismiss this as the fevered outpouring of a poet's imagination, a green Rolls insinuates itself around a narrow lane and you can almost see Nessim lounging in the back seat, on his way to Melissa. A few minutes later, in broad daylight, you watch a girl being picked up on the Corniche, the long esplanade that follows the coastline.

The revolution of 1952 no doubt dulled the spirit of the place; now, only the facades remain. But there must always have been a large element of bad taste in Alexandria's excesses. The Montazah Palace, for instance, with its ornate architecture, must have seemed ridiculous even when it was first built.

At night, the city jumps a little, a little jumpy — the fact that it is a port and a holiday resort makes for a certain style. Some maintain it's more Mediterranean than Egyptian. For all anyone knows Justine, Parneswarden and Co. are alive and well in Alex. And Pombal is still sharing a flat with Darley on the Rue Nebi Daniel; though you'd never guess it from the pavement outside.

One last quote: "Streets that run back from the docks with their tattered rotten supercargo of houses, brantling into each others' mouths, keeling over. Shuttered balconies swarming with rats, and



Corniche Boulevard. (Below) Another central scene. (Rahamim Israeli)

Alexandria

old women whose hair is full of the blood of ticks. Peeling walls leaning drunkenly to east and west of their true centre of gravity. The black ribbon of flies attaching itself to the lips and eyes of the children — the moist beads of summer flies everywhere."

Durrell did not avoid Alexandria's ugly side. One of his great achievements, then, was that he created a glamorous world of intrigue and romance while focusing largely on the squalid. With all the skill of a master illusionist.

Read him again. Or for the first time. But do it before you visit the city to see for yourself.

WHAT TO SEE — the city itself and the beaches (about 30 km. of them) are the main attractions. Jewish visitors will ask to be shown around the Great Synagogue.

Pompey's Pillar, on a small rise off Sharia Bab Sidra (within walking distance of the central Liberty Square). The column with its Corinthian capital is 27 m. high; its diameter is 16.70 m. at the base and 2.30 m. at the top. It might have been erected in 302 CE in honour of Diocletian, in gratitude for relief during the famine five years



300 BCE to c. 300 CE and include limestone statues, the east of the Rosetta Stone which provided the key for the decipherment of hieroglyphs (the original stone is in the British Museum), jewellery, coins, papyrus fragments, reliefs, paintings, funerary items, an enormous statue of Serapis, a granite statue of the Apis bull, Greek and Latin inscriptions, Christian and Coptic antiquities, a colossal head of Antony as Osiris, and so on.

The Hydrobiological Museum (near Fort Kait Bey, at the end of Sharia 26 July) contains an aquarium (about 50 tanks of fish, corals, and sponges), the 17 m. skeleton of a whale, and models of boats.

Fort Kait Bey and Ras El Tin Palace. Alexandria was at first not much larger than the island of Pharos, which was linked to the mainland by a 1,300 m. causeway. Alexander the Great commissioned the architect Deinocrates to build a new city opposite the island: the quarter of Ras el Tin is all that remains of the old city. The Lighthouse of Pharos, which was one of the wonders of the ancient world, was destroyed by a tidal wave following an earthquake in the 14th century. (The great library of Alexandria, another wonder of the ancient world, was destroyed by fire in the 2nd century.) On the spot where the lighthouse stood a fortress and mosque were built in the 18th century by Sultan Kait Bey. There is a museum in the fort. The *Ras el Tin* Palace itself is opposite the docks. From the 18th century on this was the official residence of Egyptian kings in Alexandria. Today the palace is a museum — the Gothic Room, Marble Room and Throne Room are worth seeing.

ACCOMMODATION can be difficult to find and more expensive than in Cairo, especially during the summer months. The rates quoted below are approximately at best; the lower the grading the less chance there is of having a private bath in a single room.

**** Palestine, Montazah Palace. Eastern end of town. Near the ex and late King Farouk's palace. Tel. 861887/861008. Double EL14.50 — EL 30; suite EL 99.

**** Al Salamlek, Montazah Palace. Formerly the women's quarters of the palace. Tel. 860233/860585. Single EL 7.70; double EL 9.00; suite EL 17.

On Beaa Rivage, 443 Al Gish Ave. on the Corniche. Tel. 62186. Single EL 8.50; double EL 11; suite EL 25.

**** San Stefano, Al Gish Ave. Tel. 63880. Double EL 9 — EL 12; suite EL 27 — EL 48.

**** Ocell, 16, Snad Zaghloul Sq. On the Corniche. This is one of the elegant oldies. Excellent service. Single EL 7.50; double EL 9 — EL 10; suite EL 21.

**** Windsor Palace, 17 Al Shuhada St. Tel. 808700. Another oldie on the Corniche. Single EL 4 — EL 7 — EL 9.50.

**** Maamara Palace, Maamara Beach. Tel. 889401. Double EL 11; suite EL 22.

**** San Giovanni, 205 Al Gish Ave. Tel. 40884. Double EL 9 — EL 9.50; suite EL 14. Excellent restaurant.

**** Mecca, 48 Al Gish Ave. Tel. 73936. Single EL 6.50; double EL 7.50; suite EL 12.

**** Metropole, 52 Snad Zaghloul St. Tel. 21497. Single EL 6.50; double EL 8 — EL 9.

**** Swiss Cottage, 347 El Gish Ave. (Glyn). Tel. 62885. Double EL 2 — EL 4.

**** Cleopatra, 175 Al Gish Ave. Tel. 48055. Double EL 4.

**** Lora, 25 Talaat Harb St. Tel. 809090. Single from about EL 1 to EL 2.05; double EL 2.55 — EL 3.40.

**** Borg El-Thagr, Safa Zaghloul St. Tel. 24509. Single EL 3.70; double EL 5.

**** Champs Elysees, 480 Al Gish Ave. (Laurans). Tel. 66189. Double EL 1.75 — EL 4.30.

**** Abu Kair, 30 Al Ka'd Gauber St. Double EL 2.50 — 3.50.

**** Isla, Isla St. Near the main railway station. Tel. 22085. Single EL 2.25; double EL 2.25 — EL 3.25.

**** Admiral Amin Fikry-Ramle Sq. Tel. 32858. Double EL 5 — EL 5.50; suite EL 9.50 — EL 12.50.

**** Villa Nana, 555 Al Gish Ave. (Sidi Blah). Tel. 60827. Double EL 2 — EL 2.50.

**** Armitage 358 Gish Ave. Tel.

Under the Mamluke Sultana (1250-1517) the Jewish population declined along with the general population. In 1488 there were only 25 Jewish families here.

During the 18th century Jewish fishermen from Rosetta, Damietta and Cairo formed a Jewish quarter near the shore; it was razed by an earthquake.

Napoleon imposed fines on the Jews and ordered their *Elyahu Hanavi* Synagogue destroyed. But peace and prosperity came with Muhammad Ali in the 19th century. Alexandria again became a commercial centre and its Jewish community expanded and equalled in size that of Cairo. Among the rabbis there at the time were descendants of the Israel family (my father's family) from Rhodes.

During World War I the community, influenced by Jabotinsky and "Trumpet", formed Jewish battalions to fight alongside the Allies.

In 1937 there were 24,600 Jews in Alexandria; 10 years later 21,128. After the 1954 Suez Campaign, many Jews were banished from the city and many more left on their own, causing the Alexandria Stock Exchange to close down. In 1960 there were 2,760 Jews here. There was another exodus after the 1967 war. The last rabbi left in 1973. For those who remain, going to synagogue is "an experience in loneliness" for which they don't always have the strength.

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**** Armitage 358 Gish Ave. Tel.

60237. Double EL 3.30 — EL 3.85.
 * Hydo park 21 Amn Fikry St. — Ramle Sq. Tel. 35060. Single about EL 1; double EL 1.87 — EL 2.87.
 * Altona, Amn Fikry St. — Ramle Sq. Tel. 31916. Double EL 1.35 — EL 3.30.
 * Piccadilly, 11 Al Hourreya Ave. Tel. 34802. Single EL 1.80; double EL 2.40 — EL 3.
 * Philip, 234 26 July St. (Azarita). Tel. 29820. Single about EL 1; double EL 2.30 — EL 4.40.
 * Darwiche, 90 Al Gish Ave. Tel. 74848. Single EL 1.70; double EL 2.70 — EL 3.50.
 * Capri, 22 Al Mina Ashargia. — Ramle Sq. Tel. 809310. Double EL 1.85 — EL 2.45.

RESTAURANTS

The hotels have restaurants, most of them good. The San Giovanni is reputed to have one of the best restaurants in town.

Seafood is a specialty in Alexandria. The meat in the better establishments is excellent, much better than anything you'll find in Israel. Many of the restaurants are run by Greeks or people with Greek names. Prices are about the same as in Cairo.

For those who are reluctant to trust their eyes and noses as they walk along, here are a few



Montazah Palace, Alexandria. (Rahamim Israeli)

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We do not recommend trying to save money on a tour to Egypt, where there is inevitably some small surprise, however meticulously the trip is planned. That is why we recommend a package that combines the luxurious Holiday Inn in Cairo with a Nile Cruise between Aswan and Luxor, where accommodation is always at a premium, aboard the Karnak. The operator is the reputable British firm of *Union Lloyd Ltd.*, which has established itself as a leading specialist on travel to Egypt.

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suggestions.
 Around Ramle Square you have Athineos (also a night club; Tel. 28131); Omar El Khayam (Oriental specialties; Tel. 37600); Mohammed Ahmed (ful and taamia, 17 Shaker St.); Taverna (Tel. 28189); and Denis (fish, Tel. 30257).

Among other recommended establishments are Al Ekhliss (49 Safia Zaghloul St. Tel. 23571); Asteria (Italian food; 40 Safia Zaghloul St. Tel. 22293); El Shark (El Boursa El Kadima St., Tel. 808688); Pasiroudis (also a night club, 39 el Hourreya St.); Santa Lucia (also a night club, 40 Safia Zaghloul St., Tel. 20332); and San Giovanni, in the hotel of the same name, as we said (see "Accommodation" section for address).

NIGHT CLUBS

Santa Lucia (see above for address).
 Crazy Horse (see Athineos restaurant).
 Calvados (in Admiral Hotel).
 Angelo, Ramle Sq., Tel. 28174.
 Cote d'Azur, Sab Pasha Beach, Tel. 4893.
 Miramar, 284 26 July Ave., Tel. 23871.
 Monseigneur, 16 Zaghloul Sq., Tel. 21490.

Monte Carlo, Al Gish Ave. Chatby, Tel. 78018.

There is a casino in the Montazah Palace and at the Cecil Hotel.

USEFUL ADDRESSES
 Government Tourist Information Offices: Saad Zaghloul Sq. Tel. 805571

Alexandria Port Tel. 807886
 Tourist Police Tel. 807811 Regional Committee for Tourism 19 Moral Badr St. Tel. 38637

Alexandria Governorate Horreya Road Tel. 23500
 Regional Passport Office 28 Talaat Harb St. Tel. 808690

Police Tel. 123
 Ambulance Tel. 120
 Fire Brigade Tel. 180

University Hospital, Chatby, Tel. 26952
 Inlilan Hospital, Hadra, Tel. 21459

SITES NEAR ALEXANDRIA
 Agmat, a much-frequented beach area 12 km. west of the centre.

Rosetta, 72 km. east of Alexandria. This is where the Rosetta Stone was found; there are beautiful Islamic-style homes here.

Marsa Matruh, about 290 km. west of Alexandria. Seaside resort. Accessible by road, rail and air.

El Alamein (see "Tours Northwest from Cairo").

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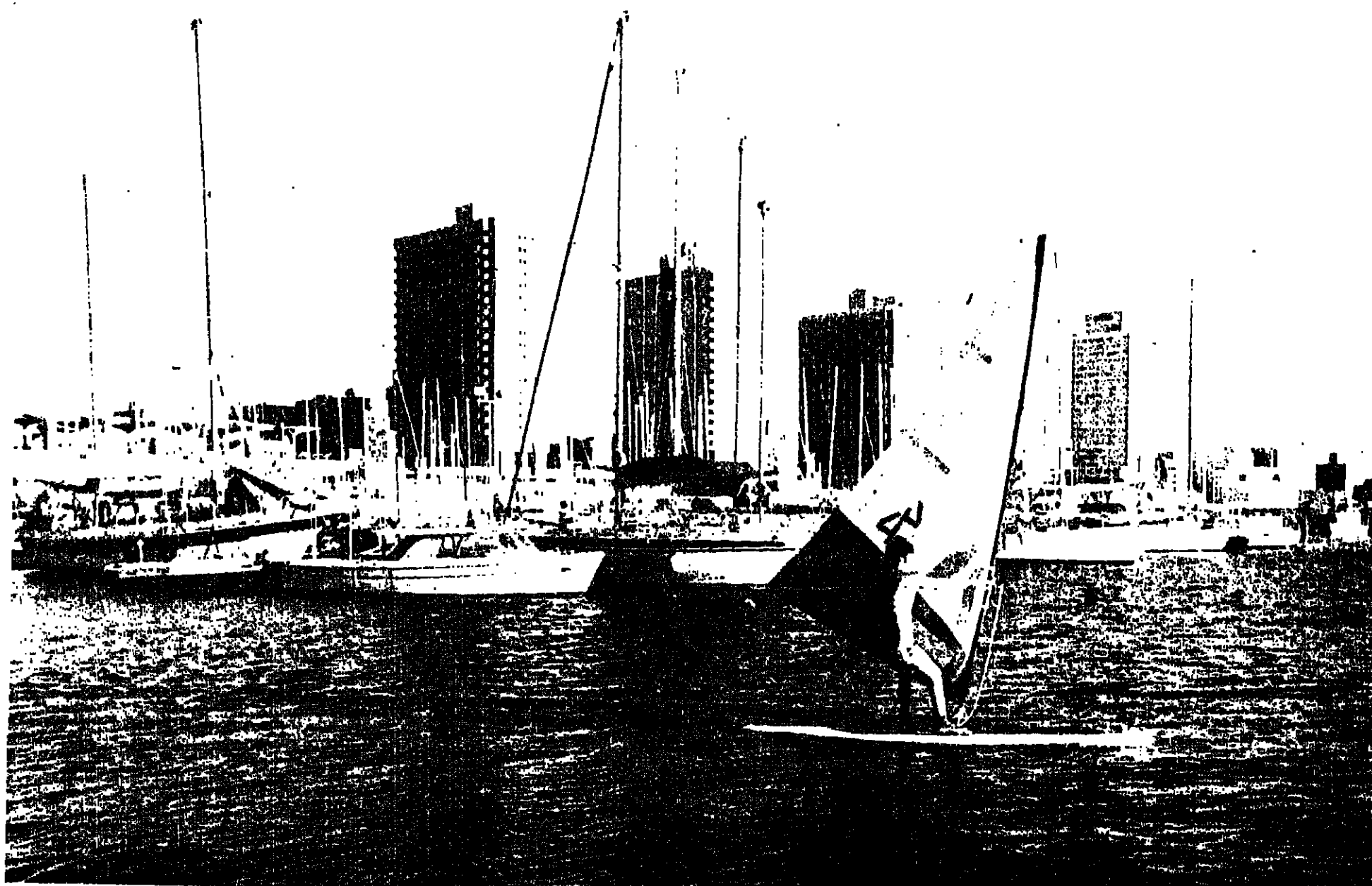
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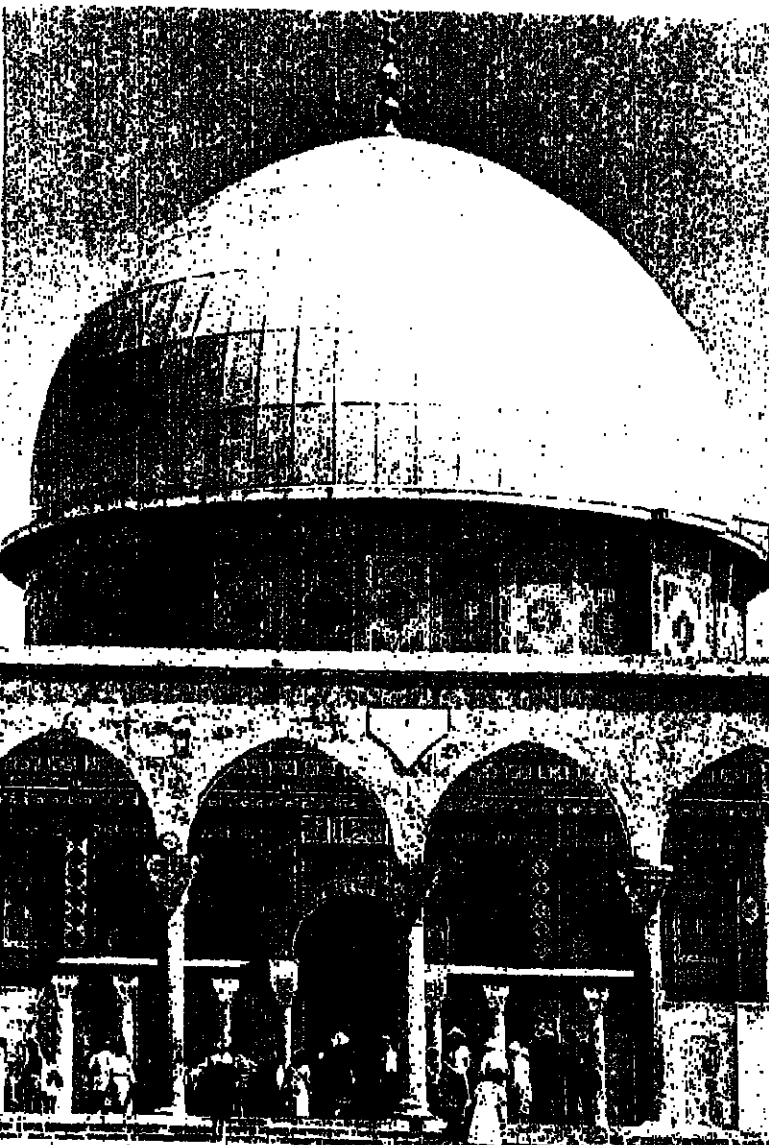
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(Above) Windsurfing at the Tel Aviv Marina. (Below) Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock.



Marble and Mosaics

The Post's HAIM SHAPIRO outlines holiday possibilities for Egyptians in Israel.

SITES SACRED to Islam and Christianity, a mystery known as the kibbutz and a new land to be discovered just a short distance from home: This is what awaits the Egyptian tourist in Israel.

Renowned for its beauty, the Dome of the Rock, popularly known as the Mosque of Omar, will be the highlight of a visit by any devout Moslem. The structure, which occupied the centre of the area on which stood the Jewish Temple, 2,000 years ago, was built by the Caliph Abd al-Malek 80 years after the Arab conquest of Jerusalem in 638 C.E.

Faced with marble and mosaics, it is, according to Moslem tradition, the place from which Mohammed ascended to heaven. Also in the mosque is a box said to hold a few hairs from the beard of the Prophet.

Within the same compound, east of the Dome of the Rock, is the Akra Mosque. It was here that President Sadat prayed during his historic visit to Jerusalem. To the west of the Temple Mount is the Western Wall, venerated by Jews as the last remnant of the Temple.

Only a short walk away, in the Christian Quarter of the Old City, is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the traditional site of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. The church is jointly held by the various Chris-

tian sects, with a Coptic chapel to the rear of the burial chapel itself.

In the western — now — city of Jerusalem is the Knesset, Israel's parliament, where Sadat addressed the Israeli people. In the foyer is a tapestry by the French-Jewish artist, Marc Chagall. To visit the Knesset, the tourist should have his passport with him.

Those who wish to linger in Jerusalem will soon come to appreciate the shady streets and stone buildings, the mixture of Jewish and Arab, East and West, and the calm quiet that political unrest has not shattered. Two large museums grace the city, the new and imposing Israel Museum, with major exhibits of art, archaeology and folklore, and the more traditional Rockefeller Museum, with another major collection of Holy Land antiquities.

BUT MANY WILL quickly exchange the quiet of Jerusalem for the hustle and bustle of Tel Aviv, Israel's largest city and the economic centre of the country. Founded in 1909 as a suburb of nearby Jaffa, Tel Aviv has since engulfed its older neighbour. Built on the shores of the Mediterranean, which is lined, for the most part, with imposing hotels, it has an air of casual informality.

Shoppers will find prices high,

when compared to Cairo, but moderate in comparison with those of Paris or London. Musts for bargain hunters, especially for the Shalom and Harnashbir department stores, as well as the Ata chain stores. The more adventurous will take a look at the small boutiques on Rehov Ibn Gvirol, the city's latest centre of fashion.

This street and Rehov Dizengoff, which is parallel to it, are also famed for their outdoor cafes, occupied from early in the day until the late hours of the night. Here, for the price of a coffee or a bottle of beer, the tourist can sit back and watch a cross-section of Israeli society parade past him in a never-ending stream.

Others will appreciate the resort towns of Herzliya and Netanya, with their wide white beaches, elegant hotels and many restaurants. Those seeking a family holiday may prefer the northern resort town of Nahariya, with small hotels and pensions in a peaceful setting, with horse-drawn carriages plodding up and down tree-lined, flower-banked, streets.

BUT IT IS the kibbutz, a phenomenon unique to Israel, that will attract a large number of Egyptians. These collective settlements, scattered throughout

(Nowitz)



Russian Church in Jerusalem. (Below) Haifa street-scene. (Rubinger)



the country, are based on the principle that property is to be shared communally, and everything on the kibbutz belongs to all the members. Men and women work in industry and agriculture, receiving their food and clothing and a small amount of money for extra expenses, from the kibbutz. In some kibbutzim, the children live separately from their parents in special children's houses, and in most of them the meals are eaten together in a large dining room.

Visitors are often surprised that despite the communal nature of the kibbutz, members live in relative comfort. Many of the commercial tours of the country include a visit to a kibbutz, but for visitors who want to see one at closer range, many of the kibbutzim run guest houses, with all the comforts of a good hotel. Since the kibbutz guest houses are usually in the most beautiful parts of the country, the visitor can combine fact-finding with the relaxation of a holiday.

For those with more specific interests, students or those concerned with specific areas of technology or agriculture, it would be well to consult a travel agent before leaving, in order to arrange meeting with Israelis in their field. The more general tourist, on the other hand, should have no trouble meeting an Israeli. A visit to the Government Tourist Office in any of the major cities will put the visitor in touch with a special volunteer programme in which Israelis invite tourists to spend an evening in their homes. For the tourist from Egypt in particular, there should be little difficulty in finding Israelis anxious to meet and entertain them.

THOSE WHO WANT to spend an evening on their own might like to try Israel's version of Middle Eastern food. Among the best places with this type of cuisine are the many restaurants of every price range in Tel Aviv's Yeminto quarter, Karem Hatemanim. Here Jews who came to Israel from Yemen serve the local varieties of hummus, felafel (matamlya), stuffed vegetables (mahshi) and roast meat.

A more cosmopolitan selection of restaurants and night clubs may be found in the "Little Tel Aviv" area, in the north of the city, in the vicinity of Rehov Yirmiyahu. The more sophisticated (and more expensive) night clubs are to be found in Old Jaffa. Rehov Hayarkon, near Rehov Allenby, is also a centre of night life.

Meanwhile, the main problem facing Egyptians wishing to visit Israel is the fact that they are advised to acquire a second passport, a long and costly procedure, so as not to be caught in another Arab state with an Israeli stamp in their passport. So far Israel has refused to stamp visas for Egyptians on a separate slip of paper.

For those who do overcome this difficulty, VIP Travel, a pioneer in tourism between the two countries, is offering a five-day, four-night package tour, including hotel and breakfast, but not the flight, for \$190. A similar four-day, three-night tour costs \$170. Both are available at Emeco, VIP's sister agency in Egypt. For groups with special interests the company is ready to arrange special visits and meetings.

Some Egyptians will no doubt be interested in utilizing the medical facilities available in Israel, and in particular the hot baths at the Dead Sea and in Tiberias. Whether they come on their own or in a group, Egyptian tourists will naturally be welcome at Israeli folklore evenings and question-and-answer sessions on Israel, organized by the Government Tourist Office.

In an effort to make Egyptians more aware of the holiday possibilities available in Israel, VIP is printing a special brochure for distribution in Egypt. On June 25, the company is organizing a seminar for travel agents in Cairo, to inform them of travel possibilities in Israel.



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